

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



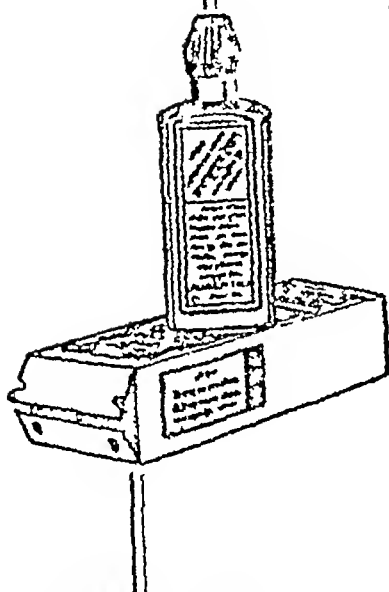
उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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प्राप्य वरान्निवीधत ।

Katha Upa I iii

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached ,

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOL XXX NOVEMBER, 1925

No 11.

TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

4th January, 1921

In connection with a noted person the Swami observed "What will mere words do if there is no character behind them? That is the great stumbling-block for all. Sri Ramakrishna would say, 'Almost all have been caught in the snare of sex-attraction. Only a few have been saved from it by the Divine Mother.' It is a most dreadful attachment. People are all right so long as they have not come under its influence. A man under its spell can stoop to anything."

He quoted a Hindi couplet describing the baneful influences of money, sex-attraction and the palate, and added "'Lust and gold,' and 'the palate and sex-impulse' are short expressions for the same thing. If one gives up these enjoyments, one verily renounces the world. One who can do this sets at naught the whole world indeed."

6th January

The world said the Swami, is a dreadful place. Only falsehood reigns here. For a Sadhu truth is every thing. If he gives up truth he can no more prosper. Little untruths are also untruths.

5th January

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Referring to somebody's deficient regard for truth the Swami said: Truth is God. Falsehood is Maya. One gets everything by holding on to truth. Sri Ramakrishna trounced Pandit Shivanath Sanyal with the words: You are all so sane people but how can you speak an untruth? You call me insane, but never does an untruth escape my lips! Wishing to keep the incident of the Kalighat priest's kicking him a secret, he asked Hriday Mukherji to elicit from him a promise not to mention it to anybody. Hriday at first objected. But Sri Ramakrishna made him elicit the promise from him three times and remarked, Now it will never escape my lips. For the good of the priest he thus put himself under a vow to observe silence on the matter.

He once made an engagement with Sri Jadu Mallik to meet him in his garden at noon. But he forgot about it being engrossed in conversation with a number of visitors. At 11 P.M., when he was about to retire for the night, he suddenly remembered it. Immediately he had a lantern lighted, and accompanied by Rakhai Maharaj, went to the garden. Finding the gate closed, he put one foot in and shouted, Here I have come.

He observed the same steadfastness to truth with regard to food also. He had given up all but could not give up truth.

"It is a tremendous ordeal to abide by truth. A good deal of sacrifice is needed. To keep something secret, saying, I won't tell it—is also a kind of untruth. To be absolutely frank and open in one's dealings is real truthfulness."

This last remark the Swami made to a celebrated Bengali novelist who had said he was greatly devoted to

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 ruth The Swami cautioned him to reflect a little before he made that statement

The Swami continued "How dreadful is this realm of Maya! What stormy billows on it! One can watch it calmly if only one succeeds in removing oneself from it Non-attachment Otherwise there is a great danger But it is a tremendously difficult task to remove oneself from it "

To-day the Durga-Saptasati will be read to him He recited a verse or two of it, with the remark that the descriptions of battles, etc., have to be read quickly, and hymns, etc., slowly He recited, with great sweetness, the stanza beginning with, 'O Durga, thou removest the fears of all creatures who remember Thee,' etc., and remarked, "How beautiful!"

Then he said "Only during the last Puja did I miss reciting the Saptasati I had an ulcer in my hand and recitation is forbidden on an occasion like this For a moment I thought that as this was a question, not of formal work, but of one's natural devotion, I might as well go through it But physical weakness prevented it Before this I do not remember to have ever missed the recitation during the Navaratri days It is all His will!"

He had the Patanjali Yoga-Sutras brought, and read out the commentary on the aphorism 'Works are neither black nor white for the Yogis, for others they are threefold—black, white and mixed' (IV 7)—The gist of the explanation is that no blame attaches to the aspirant because he is selfless

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OCCASIONAL NOTES

One of the most hopeful signs which give strength and enthusiasm to a social worker is the universal interest that is being evinced in the question of village reconstruction. It is not that we are any way nearer now to a satisfactory solution of the problem than before. Responsible politicians and leaders have only begun to talk about the need for the organisation of the village. Nevertheless, their time and energy is still devoted to politics, the most exciting and spectacular of all games in which the poor and illiterate masses of the villages are entirely ignored, except during the election campaigns. What little change has been effected in our habitual indifference towards our humble village brethren has not so far taken any permanent and well-organised shape, and unless the best minds of the country set themselves to this task in order to devise ways and means of rural reconstruction, the new-born enthusiasm may flicker away. The importance and urgency of this task can be easily realised if it is remembered that, in the peculiar circumstances in which India is placed, all hopes of establishing a national and popular government should remain a vain dream until the former is freed from the numerous shackles that are so heavily pulling her down. Three-fourths of her population depend upon agriculture, and as much as 95% of the people live in the villages. It is plain as daylight that the salvation of the country is inseparably bound up with the efficiency and welfare of the villages.

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It might be taken for granted that there is a perfect unanimity among all sections of people about the need for reorganising the rapidly decaying village institutions. Apart from the activities of the Christian and other missionary bodies which are more or less confined to cities and towns, attempts that have so far been made in

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this direction are initiated under the auspices of one or two progressive political parties. Naturally enough, owing to the peculiarly unfortunate and unnatural political conditions in which our country is placed, the movements initiated by one party, however unobjectionable they might be, fail to secure the support and sympathy of the rival parties. If one studies the somewhat chequered career of the Khaddar Movement, our meaning would become clear. In the beginning of the Movement, Khaddar was considered to be a symbol of non-co-operation, and as such the loyalists and others scrupulously kept themselves away from it. And even at the present day purely economic aspects of the question do not receive adequate consideration for the simple reason that the Movement is carried on by the Congress. In the light of this experience, we are led to believe that if the problem of rural reconstruction is to be undertaken in a calm and dispassionate spirit, it should be organised not only on purely non-party lines, but should also be rigorously kept outside the range of politics. Not that we believe that politics, social economics and similar other concerns of the nation are so many water-tight compartments, but if this question is turned into a plank in the programme of the political parties, the co-operation and good-will that are essential for the success of any scheme of village reform would be found wanting.



The existence of differences among the various political parties of our country is not the only difficulty that has to be overcome. The unfortunate communal and caste misunderstandings and quarrels only help to make the situation more delicate. Moreover, the work of the regeneration of villages has to be carried on in so many different directions that unless the state with its immense resources comes to help in a whole-hearted way, it is not possible to make substantial progress as rapidly as we would wish. As this possibility is so very remote, we must content ourselves with what little can be done.

by self-help With regard to such matters as the spread of primary education, the improvement of sanitation and the development of agriculture and cottage and home industries, the scope of popular action independent of government aid is very limited While it is the duty of the politicians to devise the best means of pressing these upon the attention of the government and induce them to move in the matter in right earnest, we shall simply attempt to indicate a few of the many directions in which social workers can help to arrest the decay of our villages



We are not of those who always dwell upon the glories of the past and pine for what is not to come Nevertheless, we consider it necessary to make a passing reference to some of the most essential features of our ancient culture mainly with a view to place before one's mind the spirit and genius of the ancient village communities By doing so, we shall be able to lay the foundation of reconstruction on a secure and permanent footing, and the subsequent evolution would proceed on a perfectly natural line From the very beginning of civilisation, India has been predominantly rural, and even at the present day it has very few cities, while the number of villages is as high as seven hundred thousands Every student of Indian history is familiar with the researches of Sir Henry Maine who has proved that the Indian village life had so much vitality and so much character that it has persisted, through thousands of years Sir Henry describes those villages as little republics and these satisfied all the requirements of a civilised society, such as their own system of education, Panchayets or arbitration boards, rural sanitation and so on The social and economic scheme of the village life was built upon mutual love and co-operation, and the communal spirit developed to such a remarkable extent that competition, rivalry and selfishness which characterise the modern society were altogether unknown Very often individual interests were readily and unquestionably sacrificed to the



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 interests of the community at large. The evils of private property were least prominent, and many things contributing to common welfare such as pathways, tanks and water-sources, pasture-lands etc., were held in common. In a word, the people were most happy and had few wants, which were supplied by their own exertions.

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Partly by natural causes and partly by wilful and violent methods, the ancient fabric has been destroyed. The part played by the old East Indian Company in running the native arts and crafts need not be dwelt upon here. If to-day one finds that abject poverty, idleness and disease have made the villages their permanent home, it is due mostly to the destruction of the indigenous village economic life. In the wake of the political subjection of the country to a predominantly commercial nation, India began to be flooded with all sorts of cheap machine-made goods from various foreign countries. Cities, towns and industrial centres grew up, attracting large numbers of people from the rural areas and thus dealt a serious blow to the already disorganised communal life of the villages. The centralised form of government acting like a soulless machine through a hierarchy of permanent officials killed what little initiative and responsibility the villages enjoyed. Everyone who is familiar with the present life of the villages will bear testimony to the fact that the very people who a few generations ago managed every detail of administration in their areas absolutely by themselves are now reduced to such utter helplessness that they seek the aid of government officials for every thing from domestic quarrels to the repair of village roads.

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It will be seen from the foregoing reasons that the problem of the reconstruction of our villages is beset with difficulties, and even if we succeed in overcoming these for obvious reasons, it is impossible to expect the exact past restored. All that we can hope for is to remove the

serious disadvantages that clog the life of the villages by reforms and agencies calculated to bring out local talent, initiative and co-operation. First in importance in this direction come measures that would mitigate the poverty of the people. This poverty again has a negative aspect, namely the indebtedness of the peasantry. Some success has, of course, been achieved in this line by the spread of co-operative credit societies. But it must be said that except in urban areas these have not touched the poor landless labourers. The sooner the poor people are brought within the reach of the co-operative societies the smoother will be the path of the social workers in the villages. Even the provision of cheap and easy credit will not by itself raise the economic status of the poor villagers. Unless the peasants freed from their heavy burden of debts are taught and provided with suitable means of increasing their income as well as employing their leisure hours in profitable occupation there is every likelihood of their reverting to their original indebtedness. In this connection the disinterested efforts made by the leaders to universalise hand-spinning and hand-weaving deserve the whole-hearted support of our countrymen irrespective of politics, race and creed. Although cloth, coming next in importance to food occupies a supreme position in the scale of national industries and specially in rural economics, we believe a systematic effort should be made to develop *all forms* of home and cottage industries.



The towns, on account of numerous opportunities for enjoyment of all kinds and the possibilities for the free play of individual ambition and talent, draw the bold and the adventurous from the villages. Consequently superstitions orthodox conservatism reactionism, ignorance prejudice and faction find a convenient shelter in rural areas. Unscrupulous men, too are not wanting to take advantages of the weaknesses of the villagers. It has already been indicated that villages are the real backbone

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of our national life, and so long as progress in education, social reform and political consciousness is more or less confined to cities and towns, it will be impossible for India to fulfil her mission in life. The remedy can be found only in men of culture and character, settling in villages with a disinterested motive to serve. The lines along which these people will have to work their way will differ with the varying circumstances, and it will by no means be a difficult matter for the worker on the spot to decide for himself in what way his energies should be most advantageously applied. We have already indicated the need for effecting improvements in the deplorable economic condition of the peasants by devising ways and means for lightening the burden of their debts and providing supplementary sources of earning. The co-operative movement and home industries would naturally occur to one's mind in this connection. These by themselves are not sufficient. Bound down by the conventions of caste and orthodoxy the villager, poor though he is, is notorious for his extravagance on occasions like marriage, funerals, special festivals etc., even to the extent of running into debts. The spread of a knowledge of the essentials of religion and spiritual life and the example of practical social reform by men of culture and high social status can alone reduce the mischief of such evils. Next to this extravagance, comes the proneness of the villager for litigation. With the disappearance of the old ties of communal life and the patriarchal influence of the wise elders, this tendency of litigation has become so wide-spread that it will tax to the utmost the best energies of the social workers to check it. Panchayets and arbitration boards are the most natural agencies to think of, but the success of these again depend upon securing men of incorruptible character and unselfishness—men who would always work as the servants of the people.

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It may strike the readers as very strange that we have not insisted upon the need for the spread of education in

nature. She carefully thought out the ways and means, and with unparalleled courage and calm audacity she underwent mental and physical Tapasya to realise the goal. Long periods of such rigorous discipline, shining examples of God-intoxicated men and age-long traditions have given to the Indian mind its peculiar religious and metaphysical bent.

However, this was not her whole mentality. When we read the ancient literature of India, we find that her activities have been many-sided. She has created varied systems of philosophy, cosmogony and subjective sciences. She had different kinds of religious orders embodying different ideals, varied systems of Yoga, physical sciences, worldly trades, industries, and fine arts. She had systems of politics, republics, empires, kingdoms. She had, further, the spirit of expansion. Her religions spread over Japan and China and westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria. The traces of her culture are found in Mesopotamia. Her vast literature embraces the whole of life-religion, philosophy, Yoga, logic, rhetoric, grammar, poetry, drama, fiction, politics, sociology, medicine, astronomy, painting, sculpture, architecture, dancing, in short, all the arts and sciences which could be useful to the mind or the body of humanity. An innate and dominant spirituality, an unexampled vital creativeness, a keen, powerful and penetrating intellect and an indomitable will which defied even death were the characteristics of ancient India. The age of the spirit—the Vedas and the Upanishads, was followed by centuries of heroic action and social construction. And this great classical age was marked by an insatiable thirst for detailed refinement in science, art and scholarship. The spiritual background was always there, because the thoughtful Indian mind never lost sight of the goal. The post-classical period saw completion of the cycle. Even the sensuous, emotional and æsthetic tendencies of man were brought into the service of the spiritual. This is the inner meaning and sense of the Pauranic and Tantric systems and the religion of Bhakti.

The law of cycles which is operative everywhere in this world of name and form overtook the Indian nation at this stage. There was a cessation of free and unhampered intellectual activity, a slumber of the scientific mind, a weakening of will and a stoppage of intuitive creation. There was a fading of the joy of creation along with a spirit of passivity, a keen desire to escape from the ills of life instead of a manly endeavour to master them, a blind attachment to the external forms of things, an unpardonable obedience to the dictates of authority and an utter lack of the spirit of individualism and intrepid thinking. The essential spirit of Indian culture, however, remained. Even in the period of her decline she produced personalities of remarkable mental and physical vigour, but when compared with the past the decadence was marked. It was this state of helplessness which gave the European adventurer his chance.

The impact of this alien pressure brought forth, as was inevitable, a reaction. At the outset it was imitative. But it revived the dormant Indian mind, critical and creative. It created an earnest desire for emancipation and self-expression. This new impulse necessitated the turning of a new eye upon its past culture, a thorough sifting of the essentials and the non-essentials, an intellectual effort to re-apply old principles to new environments and the cultivation of the strength of mind to master and assimilate them. This commingling of the two rivers of thought, Eastern and Western, and the physical subjection of her peoples which was sapping her vitality and leading to her economic ruin, have been instrumental in bringing about a movement of rebirth. The Indian mind has now before it the supreme task of recovering her old spiritual experiences, of expressing them in new and varied forms of philosophy, art, science and literature, and of applying them with unflinching intrepidity to the problems of her external life—political, social and economic. This is the special mission which India has to fulfil. She of all countries has been charged with the solution of this complicated problem, because she has the

master-key in her hands, and inspite of ups and downs never lost sight of Truth. This loyalty to Truth has made her a chosen nation in the eyes of the gods. She is to set an example to the whole world and to demonstrate the possibility of harmonising a bewildering variety on the basis of an underlying unity. This is the significance of the Indian national movement.

It is asserted that nations and systems of culture fulfil special functions as organs of humanity as individuals fulfil special uses in the community. In that case within the bounds of India is the focal or polar points of the race. The great task of reconciling the opposites would devolve upon her. It seems to have been decreed by Providence that Aryans, Dravidians, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis should meet in this sacred land and learn their mutual significance and responsibilities. India is to find herself to be not merely a congeries of warring fragments a battle-ground of rival political factions held in a mechanical combination by the pressure of a benevolent foreign element but a single immense organism filled into the tide of one strong pulsating life from one end to the other.

It is extremely difficult to foresee the nature of the shape the new creative impulse will assume but we can safely assert that the spiritual motive in India will be the governing strain. It is indeed significant that almost all great movements of life in this country have drawn their inspiration from religion and spirituality. The onslaught of the Western intellectual and rationalistic culture resulted in the creation of new religions. The Brahmo Samaj in Bengal started with an attempt to restate the Vedānta and though protestant, followed the curve of the national mind. The Arya Samaj in the Punjab based itself on a fresh interpretation of the Vedas and made a fresh attempt to apply the old Vedantic principles to the changed conditions of modern life. The movement associated with the great names of Śrī Rāmākrishna and Swamī Vivekananda took up all the scattered threads of the past and combined them in a harmonious whole. It reaffirmed the old

monasticism, but by a process of judicious assimilation it gave it an aggressive and a social turn. The rest of India have felt the influence of these movements, and all religious sects and disciplines are becoming strongly revived, active and dynamic. Islam is also showing signs of reawakening, and endeavours are being made to vitalise the old Islamic ideals. These signs clearly indicate that there is a tendency towards the return of the spirit upon life, everywhere. The writings of Sir John Woodroffe who has evinced such a keen interest in Indian religious and philosophical literature have brought to light the hidden gems in Tantric literature and have been instrumental in dissipating many false notions. They have clearly shown that Ancient India did not reject life but embraced it with a mastering fold. The erudite writings of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh on philosophical and psychological subjects have opened up a new path and upon past foundations have reared up a superb superstructure. His writings clearly indicate that the Indian mind is capable of sublime creative activity once it has been placed in a free atmosphere.

In subjective sciences and in poetry literature and art also there have been definite beginnings. India is now producing works of art with a distinct message. They display clearly the national individuality and the distinctive national bent. But in the external life of the nation no such originality is as yet visible. There is an attempt to imitate the West blindly in matters political, and although here and there we find some illuminating idea it cannot be said that the national mind has assumed a coherent form in respect of it. Partly this is due to the hampering political conditions. The Indian mind, probably, is engaged in finding out ways and means of removing the existing disabilities first. When the time of political reconstruction comes it will apply itself to the task with absolute freedom from the notions borrowed from the West and will evolve a polity suitable to her national genius and environments. Of course, the cry is persistent that existing forms and methods of administra-

tion are entirely unsuitable to Indian conditions. They require a thorough overhauling, and this is the root cause of the intense struggle that is being waged on the plane political. Indian society is in a still more confused stage. Old forms and institutions are crumbling under the irresistible pressure of new environments, but owing to an inertia of thought and lack of strength of will no clear methods of social advance and social adjustment are laid out.

(To be continued)

## INDIAN WOMANHOOD IN THE ACCOUNTS OF GREEK WRITERS \*

BY HARIPADA GHOSAL, Vidyabenode MA MRS

Those of the Western scholars who make capital of Hellenic influence on India should remember that though architecture, sculpture, painting and coinage had felt the influence of Greek culture, it may be said that foreigners had very little opportunity to study the social condition of an ancient and highly civilised people like the Indians scattered over this continent. Alexander's campaign overwhelmed India like a storm but like a storm it passed away after only a transient stay. Macedonian authority was swept away as early as 322 B C, and Indian princes asserted their independence and exterminated the last vestiges of a foreign domination.

The accounts of Greek travellers and writers about the social condition of the Indian people are not trustworthy as they knew India only imperfectly, and their information is scrappy and defective. Failing to have a first-hand knowledge many of these men depended upon hearsay and depicted India and the customs prevailing at that time, as suited their purpose. Negligible though they appear, they shed faint rays on the otherwise obscure nature of those times and are of some value in tracing the

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\* The picture of Indian womanhood depicted in the article is more than we know —Editor P B



gradual progress of the thoughts and ideas of the Indian people. But we should be wary and cautious in gleanings facts which are sometimes so absurd, alien and repugnant to the Indian temperament that we should reject them as worthless stuff. We endorse the views of Dr G N Banerjee. "Neither did the Assyrians, Arabs, nor Phoenecians reach the true centres of Hindu civilisation. They merely touched the fringe of Indian culture by frequenting those sea-board towns, where the mixed population was more occupied with commerce than with intellectual pursuits. The conquerors, previous to Alexander the great, did no more than reach the gates of India and reconnoitre its approaches, while Alexander himself failed to penetrate beyond its vestibule" (*Hellenism in Ancient India* Intro p 2)

This also may be said to be true of many of the Greek writers who marked certain customs and usages in some tribes and semi-barbarous people and supposed them to be of the Hindu people. The only thing which is reliable and hence can be depended upon is the writing of Megasthenes who lived in the court of Chandragupta between 302 and 288 B C, but his original book is lost. Subsequent writers quoted from it so often that we can get a glimpse into the subject-matter and the manner of his writing. Before him Strabbo, Pliny and Anan wrote about India, but they derived their materials from the accounts of writers who accompanied Alexander during his Indian expedition. However trustworthy may be these writers about the civil and military administration of Chandragupta's court, yet with the single exception of perhaps Megasthenes, we cannot accept their conclusions as reliable with regard to the social customs and usages of the Indian population. Again, Megasthenes himself admits that he had no personal and first-hand knowledge of the people of the lower Gangetic plain, and that he had taken down their accounts from hearsay and rumour which have very little historical value as such.

We know the exalted position women held in the Buddhist India as well as their important relationship in

social and civic affairs. Megasthenes notes that women played an important part in royal hunting. Armed guards mostly women were purchased from foreign countries and they 'formed an indispensable element in the courts of the ancient Indian monarchs'. But it is not clear if the services of Indian women were requisitioned for the purpose. This is perhaps an imitation by Chandragupta of a foreign custom, as we do not come across such instances of royal protection by amazonian body guards in more ancient writings. That this practice was prevalent in Chandragupta's time is corroborated by the drama *Mudraraksas Act III*. Strabbo mentions that girls were bought from their parents and that maidens of prepossessing and handsome appearance were regularly imported at Broach for the royal harem in the 1st century A.D.

Chanakya lays down that 'on getting up from bed the king should be received by troops of women armed with bows. in his *Arthashastra*, Bk. I Chap. XXI. Professor R. Shyam Shastri's translation of Chanakya's *Arthashastra* is a momentous publication throwing a flood of light on the polity and state of society in the Maurya period. Chanakya advises to entrust women with the important function of espionage. Clever and poor Brahmin widows called *Parivrajikas*, honoured in the king's harem, should 'frequent the residences of the king's prime ministers,' and women with shaven head and those of the Sudra caste should be employed as wandering spies. Thus mendicant women and prostitutes were to be deputed to spy the private character of state officials and to convey important information on which the king would take steps, to the institute of espionage. As the government placed a great reliance on espionage for its very existence, the services of women, especially of courtesans in this sphere of public service, were indeed very useful.

The position of a woman in any society is to be determined by the freedom she enjoys, her share in property, the treatment she receives from the custodians of her

personal safety, the nature of her duties as regards inter-relation of the sexes and as mistress of the household. The *Arthashastra* says that of the eight forms of marriage any kind was approvable if that pleased the contracting parties, and the first four forms were valid if approved by the father. The father-in-law could select a man to remarry his widow daughter-in-law, but a widow selecting her own partner forfeited whatever was given to her by her father-in-law and husband. A woman could not make a free use of her *stridhan* if she had a son. Neither the enmity of the wife to her husband, nor that of the husband to his wife, was sufficient for the dissolution of marriage, but a divorce could be obtained for their mutual enmity. Still 'marriages contracted in accordance with the customs of the first four kinds of marriage cannot be dissolved' (*Artha*, Bk III Chap III). Remarriage of a woman was allowed if her husband had long gone abroad, or had become an ascetic, or was dead within a year, if she had no issue, and after one year, if she had an issue. The man to be selected should be her husband's brother next in age to him, and in the absence of such a person, she might marry one who belonged to the same *gotra* as her husband's.

Thus sufficient freedom was vouchsafed to women in those days, though it had to be restricted in later times. Divorce and remarriage of widows which obtain in Western countries, but which is regarded as the most abominable and heinous of social crimes by modern Hindus as subversive of all laws of morality and canons of chastity, were not unknown in India. There was no hard and fast rule with regard to a Brahmin's marriage with the other three castes. Both forms of marriage such as *anuloma* and *pratiloma* were widely practised, though in later times they were abolished, and only marriages of men and women of equal castes came to be regarded as the legitimate forms of matrimonial union. Absolute authority of the father in the selection of the bridegroom for his daughter, or of the bride for his son, came into practice in the process of time, and the free-

dom of boys and girls in the selection of their mates was checked later on. Judging from these facts we may conclude that a woman had a large amount of freedom which was curtailed by and by to make her subservient to the will of the sterner sex and absolutely helpless and dependent on her earthly lord.

Now let us see how far the information supplied by the *Arthashastra* tallies with the accounts of Megasthenes, and of the Greek and Roman writers on India. We may accept those of their opinions and conclusions which were corroborated by an authentic work like the *Arthashastra* and reject those which are absurd, which never were, nor are ever consistent with the culture of a highly civilised society. The notes of those writers will be useful so far as they throw an additional light on obscure points of social customs in that remote age.

Strabbo (14 or 24 A.D.) says that boys and girls selected their mates and women died on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Men took their wives for begetting children, and polygamy was in vogue among the less learned and wise. Aristobolus confirms the above statements and mentions some strange and unnatural customs. Those who, on account of their poverty, could not give their daughters in marriage, took them in their youth to the bazaar and attracted customers by the sound of conches and trumpets. A customer being available, the girl, veiled from head to foot, was shown her face, and the customer agreeing contracted the marriage. This is more than we know. Arian in his *Indica* states that girls coming to age were publicly taken to the market, and they selected their husbands who proved strong in hand to hand fight. This custom might have been prevalent among some warrior tribes, but neither contemporary literature, nor tradition can supply any proof of its existence. Diodorus Siculus says that for matrimonial relationship contracting parties had not to depend on their father's will, but were bound in wedlock of their own accord. Immature youngmen afterwards discovered their mistake after a few years of marriage and repented

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for their action. Women also sometimes did not like their husbands and used to get rid of them by administering poison. This bad practice was prevalent for a long time. Then it was ruled that unless women were pregnant, they had to follow their husbands in death. Otherwise they would have to live as widows and were looked down as impious if they failed. Such a state of affairs existed in the period of transition when the selection of mates as a consequence of blind amatory effusion of juvenile people continued, and rigid paternal authority which asserted itself naturally in the determination and choice of brides and bridegrooms, had not yet clearly come into existence, as the evil effects of free selection had begun to manifest their disastrous results on society.

Here is a distinct stage in the evolution of the woman's position in Hindu society. The unrestrained freedom of a woman was checked. Immolation on the funeral pyre—an ancient custom which had become obsolete owing to a widow's free-will to remarry the man of her liking after the decease of her husband and which had degenerated into forced burning in later times—was hedged in with sanctity and came to be regarded as the sole criterion of a married woman's attachment and devotion to her husband. Womanly chastity and purity of character and true greatness consisted in curbing immoderate passions and inordinate desires for free intercourse, and law-givers who sought the welfare of society insisted, with all the force they could command and by an appeal to religion, on young women to subscribe themselves to the superior wisdom of their parents in all matters relating to their future domestic happiness and conjugal felicity. The same distrust of women which we see even in the Vedic Rishis and wise men in different periods of Indian history, showed itself again, and henceforth anecdotes and stories of ideal womanhood were devised and interpolated into sacred writings to make women docile and amenable to religious doctrines.

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## GOD'S HAND

It is not given to all of us to recognise Truth wherever and whenever we meet it. We may believe in our own scriptures, in our own religion. But how often prejudiced are we when we discuss with men of a different faith who present to us their own belief and scripture as the revealed word of God! Almost identical incidents when recorded in our own books we accept as true but when we read them in foreign scriptures or accounts we slight them as myths. It is the glory of Hinduism that, at least theoretically, it makes no such distinction, for it is the teaching of Vedanta that God reveals Himself through all the ages to true devotees regardless of nationality, colour or creed.

Open any scripture, and what do you find? From cover to cover the scriptures bear witness to a living God, guiding, protecting and watching over His children. He stretches forth His hand to succour in time of need, to rescue from danger and to nourish those who trust in Him. He often overrules in human affairs and works wonders in heaven and on earth. The worldlying sees only good fortune, a happy chance, but the children of God recognise a brooding Presence, a loving Protector, the Hand of God.

And is it not true that, almost unconsciously, too often we believe that intervening on the part of God was divinely natural in the past, but that now these special interpositions of God's providence are hardly to be expected?

We cannot know God's plans. These plans are not revealed to man, least of all to the prying, inquisitive mind. But that He whose hand protected in the past is with us to-day, we find verified in the lives of godly men in all lands. A few simple stories from the annals of Christian saints perhaps will bring this fact home to us and may help to strengthen and revivify our faith. The

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stories are culled and adapted from The Hand that
Intervenes, by W A Spicer

I

THE STRANGER

John Jones, a Methodist preacher, was travelling on horseback through a desolate part of Wales when looking to the right he observed a rough-looking man, armed with a reaping knife, following him on the other side of a hedge that lined the roadside. The man was hurrying along evidently trying to reach before him a gate where it was necessary for the horseman to dismount.

The preacher had a bag of money which he had collected to build a new church. Fearing that not only the money but also his life was in danger, he stopped his horse, and bowing his head he prayed to God for protection. After a moment of silent prayer the horse became restive to go on. Jones looked up, and then to his surprise he saw a man on a white horse alongside of him. This sudden appearance of a fellow-traveller at the moment of danger, was most welcome.

Jones told the stranger about the dangerous position in which he had been placed, and how relieved he felt by his unexpected appearance. The stranger made no reply, only gazed intently in the direction of the gate. The preacher followed his gaze, and doing so saw the reaper emerge from behind a bush, and run at full speed across a field to their left. He had evidently seen that there were two men now and had given up his intended attempt to rob the preacher.

All cause of danger being now removed, Jones tried to enter into conversation with his companion, but without the slightest success. Not a word did he get in reply. He continued talking, however, as they rode toward the gate failing to see any reason for, and indeed feeling a little hurt at this strange silence.

Having watched the reaper disappear over the brow of a neighbouring hill, Jones turned to his companion

again and said, Can it for a moment be doubted that my prayer was heard, and that you were sent for my deliverance by the Lord? Then the horseman uttered the single word, Amen (It is truly so) Not another word did he speak, though the preacher continued endeavouring to get from him replies to his questions

They were now approaching the gate Jones hurried on his horse for the purpose of opening it And having done so he waited for the stranger to pass through But he came not Jones turned his head to look for him He was gone vanished as unexpectedly and mysteriously as he had appeared

The preacher was dumbfounded He looked back in the direction from which they had just been riding but his companion was not to be seen He could not have gone through the gate, nor have made his horse leap the high hedges which on both sides shut in the road Where was he? Could it be possible that there had been no man or horse at all, that it was a vision born of imagination? Jones tried hard to convince himself that this was the case, but in vain for unless some one had been with him why had the reaper hurried away? No, Jones thought this horseman was no creature of my imagination But who could he have been?

He asked himself this question again and again and then a feeling of profound awe stole over him He remembered the singular manner in which the stranger had first appeared He recollected his silence, and then again that single word to which he had given utterance which had been elicited from him by mentioning the name of the Lord What could he then believe? But one thing and that was that his prayer had been heard and that help had indeed been sent as a response to his prayer

Full of this thought the preacher threw himself on his knees at the side of the road, praising God who had so signally preserved him from danger

He then mounted his horse and continued on his journey

II

NON-RESISTANCE

In the early days of Methodism, in the eighteenth century, John Wesley, the leader of the movement, had many experiences of deliverance by the manifest interposition of God. The message of reform was so unpopular as to arouse the bitterest opposition of the mob who often tried to take his life. Wesley after many unmistakable proofs had the conviction that the hand of God is on every person and thing, ruling events as it seems good to Him. He practised non-resistance and was absolutely fearless trusting altogether that nothing could happen without the will of the Lord.

At Wednesbury, in England, a mob gathered outside his house, shouting, "Bring out the preacher!" The leader of the rabble was asked to come inside the house. Wesley spoke to him a few words when suddenly the man became as docile as a lamb. This man went out and brought in two others who were mad with rage. They also in a few minutes were entirely changed. Then Wesley addressed the mob. They listened and shortly dispersed as if they had forgotten the object that had brought them there.

On another occasion Wesley was pulled and dragged about for hours by a lot of ruffians. He did not resist but kept on praying aloud. At last the leader of these men turned and said, "Sir, I will protect you. Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head." He took Wesley by the hand and led him away carrying him through a river on his shoulders to escape his wild companions.

One day while preaching in an open square, one man to stop him began bawling at Wesley's ear. Others threw stones. But the stones instead of hitting Wesley struck the bawling man, and he ran away. Another tried to push the preacher off, when a stone struck him on the forehead, and he fell down unconscious. A third man got close to Wesley, and when he tried to pull the

preacher down was hit by a sharp stone, disabling him. All this time with stones flying about him, Wesley preached on unceasingly.

In Ireland a mayor sent agents to disturb his meetings. They threw at the preacher whatever came to hand, but nothing hit him. He walked quietly forward, looking the mob in the face and the rioters opened right and left to let him pass. When he reached a friend's house, a ruffian stood in the door to prevent his entrance. One of the mob aimed a blow at Wesley but instead of hitting him he knocked the ruffian down flat. Then Wesley stepped inside the house. Through all this tumult Wesley felt no fear and no resentment. His mind was firmly fixed on God.

One day Wesley went to visit the bedside of a sick man. Scarcely had he entered the house and sat down when a multitude of shouting people gathered outside. It was a terrible noise and confusion. The mob roared 'Bring out the Methodist! Where is the Methodist?' Then they forced open the outer door and filled the passage. Some of the ruffians being angry at the slowness of the rest, pushed them aside, and setting their shoulders to the inner door cried out, 'Stop lads, stop!' The hinges broke and the door fell back into the room.

Wesley stepped forward into the midst of the crowd and said 'Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me?' The ruffians were dumbfounded and let him pass. And the captain of the mob following Wesley swore that no man should touch him.

About this incident Wesley wrote in his journal: 'I never saw before * * * the hand of God so clearly shown as here * * * Although the hands of hundreds of people were lifted up to strike or throw yet they were one and all stopped in the midway, so that not a man touched me with his fingers neither was anything thrown from first to last * * * Who can deny that God heareth prayer, or that He has all power in heaven and earth?'

THE FOREIGN PROPAGANDA FOR INDIA *

BY DR BHUPENDRA NATH DUTT, M A , PH D

The problem of "Propaganda for India in Foreign Lands" is agitating the minds of our politicians to-day, and there are two kinds of opinion on the matter. The one section does not believe in foreign propaganda, it wants to cut off India from the rest of the world, it anathematises everything that bears the brand 'foreign'. Indeed, this section is trying to build a Chinese Wall around India, it is trying to prevent the world-currents from flowing into our land. On the other hand, the other section believes in foreign propaganda, but they have launched out nothing as yet. Personally, I am a believer of propaganda for India in foreign lands, and the exiles and emigrants living in foreign lands have done their quota of the work unaided. But in our practical experiences we have found out that without help and backing from the mother country India cannot be represented properly abroad.

The work "Foreign Propaganda abroad" needs a little elucidation. By "Foreign Propaganda for India" I don't mean only political propaganda for India in England. I mean also representation of Indian activities in all their aspects, namely, political, religious, cultural, scientific, economical etc in different lands. During my sojourn in Europe and America I have found out that in some countries like America there is an open hostility against India, and in other countries complete ignorance in matters Indian, which have given rise to prejudices.

In this matter of terrible prejudices against India, there are two agencies which are accountable for this sad state of things—firstly, the imperialism of the dominant nations, and secondly, the Christian missionary propaganda.

* Notes of a short lecture delivered in Calcutta

Unfortunately the Christian missionaries in their zeal for propaganda become the protagonists of their national chauvinism. Of course, in our present condition we cannot combat the first, but we can dispel to a certain extent the prejudices that exist against India in various ways. And it is the duty of educated India to take up this task. We must show the civilised world that we live, think and have our beings just as they do that we have the same kind of human aspirations, problems and determination to solve them, and that we are determined to take our share in solving the common problems of mankind.

In this matter, I am at variance with that tendency which wants to isolate India from outside in the name of nationalism. We cannot remain isolated. Indeed history says that India was never cut off from the rest of the world. Migrations have taken place in India from the outside and gone out of this land. The historians say that Plato was influenced by the Indian thought. The American Prof. Ross says that within the last 50 years the Indian philosophy has tremendously influenced the Occidental thought. If that be the case in the past, there is no reason why India should not again give her best to outside.

In this matter, the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order and their disciples have done and are still doing their utmost in giving the best of Indian thought according to their lights, ideals and world-views. They are doing their quota in dispelling the prejudices against the Indians. Many ladies and gentlemen in America have told me that before Swami Vivekananda went there, they were fed up with the stories of mothers throwing their babies into the Ganges to be devoured by crocodiles, and mark it well that in the pictures depicting this story the babies were painted white and the mothers black! I will give you another illustration. I was in Providence in 1913 when once I read in the papers that the Secretary of the Ramabai Association asked the American public to supply the Association with funds for continuing their

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work in India as the Hindus there burn their widows and throw their babies into the Ganges! Reading this I made an appointment with the lady in order to disabuse her mind regarding India. I visited her. She breathed fire and brimstone for three hours against me, and finally said 'What would have been your fate if the missionaries had not gone there!'

Perhaps historically that was partially true that the missionaries started first the modern educational system in India, but I am not sure whether such kind of fanatical propaganda helps India. Therefore the work of the Swamis in this direction has been invaluable. In religious conferences and in various kinds of societies they have spoken for India.

In the same way some of the Mahomedan sects are sending their representatives in foreign lands, and they are doing the thing in the right direction. Every sect or people should do its level best to dispel the misconceptions that exist about them, and give others the best that they have to give. There should be contact between the East and the West in every kind of activity of life. In this matter, 'we should follow the Japanese method, who show themselves up in every kind of international congress and conference.

It is for the public to take up the cause. If we want to go abreast with the rest of mankind, if we want to be a living nation, we must come in cultural and other kinds of contact with all the countries of the world. We cannot afford to keep ourselves aloof. The only way is to allow the world-currents to come in our midst and not to build a Chinese Wall around us and say that we are the most spiritual people. We should give our best to humanity and take the best others have to give us, and then there will be mutual amity, peace and good-will in the world.

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA

(Continued from p 475 )

सर्गादं प्रकृतिरस्य कार्यकारणरूपिणी ॥

सत्त्वादिभिर्गुणैर्धत्ते पुरुषोऽव्यक्त ईक्षते ॥ १७ ॥

17 In the projection<sup>1</sup> etc of this universe the Prakriti, transformed into causes and effects<sup>2</sup> assumes, through the Gunas such as the Sattva, etc , the conditions for such modification But the Purusha, unmodified,<sup>3</sup> merely looks on

[1 Projection &c — i.e projection, continuity and dissolution

2 Causes and effects The causes are—Mahat Egoism and the five subtle elements The effects are—the five gross elements, the ten organs and the Manas or mind

3 Unmodified &c —Hence it is distinct from the Prakriti ]

व्यक्तादयो विकूर्वाणा धातवः पुरुषेक्षया ॥

लब्धवीर्या सृजन्त्यण्ड संहता, प्रकृतेर्वलात् ॥ १८ ॥

18 The component elements such as the Mahat, etc , while transforming are charged with power under the glance of the Purusha and, supported by the Prakriti combine<sup>1</sup> and form the universe

[1 Combine &c —Hence the universe can be grouped under those several categories ]

सप्तैव धातव इति तत्रार्था, पञ्च खादयः ॥

ज्ञानमात्मोभयाधारस्ततो देहेन्द्रियासव ॥ १९ ॥

19 The view that the components are only seven in number, comprises the five elements such as ether,<sup>1</sup> etc , together with the Jiva and the Supreme Self, which is the substratum of both subject and object From these seven proceed<sup>2</sup> the body, the organs and the Pranas

[1 Ether &c —The five gross elements The causes from Prakriti down to the subtle elements inhere in these

2 Proceed &c —Hence the remaining sixteen categories are accounted for ]

षडित्यत्रापि भूतानि पञ्च षष्ठः परः पुमान् ॥

तैर्युक्त आत्मसम्भूतैः सृष्टेर्दं समुपाविशत् ॥ २० ॥

20 The view that there are six categories, comprises the five elements and the Supreme Self,<sup>1</sup> which makes up the sixth. This Supreme Self, being provided with the five elements, which have emanated out of Itself, has made all this<sup>2</sup> and entered into it.

[<sup>1</sup> The Supreme Self—which includes the Jiva of the previous enumeration

<sup>2</sup> All this—the body and everything else.]

चत्वार्येवेति तत्रापि तेज आपोऽन्नमात्मनः ॥

जातानि तैरिदं जातं जन्मावयविनः खलु ॥ २१ ॥

21 In the view limiting the categories to four only, fire, water and earth, together with the Atman from which they have sprung, are meant. It is from these<sup>1</sup> that the origin of all effects has taken place.

[<sup>1</sup> From these &c.—So they are all included in these four.]

संख्याने सप्तदशके भूतमात्रेन्द्रियाणि च ॥

पञ्च पञ्चैकमनसा आत्मा सप्तदशः स्मृतः ॥ २२ ॥

22 In the enumeration of seventeen categories the gross elements, the subtle elements and the organs—five of each—together with the mind and the Atman constitute the seventeen.

तद्वत्षोडशसंख्याने आत्मैव मन उच्यते ॥

भूतेन्द्रियाणि पञ्चैव मन आत्मा त्रयोदश ॥ २३ ॥

23 Similarly, in the enumeration of sixteen categories the Atman<sup>1</sup> itself is taken as the mind. The five elements, the five organs, the mind and the twofold<sup>2</sup> Atman—these make up the thirteen categories.

[<sup>1</sup> Atman &c.—as cogitating

<sup>2</sup> Twofold &c.—as Jiva and Paramatman.]

एकादशत्वं आत्मासौ महामूतेन्द्रियाणि च ॥

अष्टौ प्रकृतयश्चैव पुरुषश्च नवेत्यथ ॥ २४ ॥

24 In the enumeration of eleven categories this Atman, the five elements and the five organs are taken into consideration. While the eight causes<sup>1</sup> and the Purusha make up the nine categories.

[1 Light causes—i.e. Prakṛiti, Mahat, Egoism, and the five subtle elements.]

इति नानाप्रसङ्गानं तत्त्वानामृषिभिः कृतम् ॥

सर्वं न्याय्यं युक्तिमत्त्वाद्बिदुषा किमशोभनम् ॥ २५ ॥

25 Thus the sages have made various enumerations of the categories. All of these, being reasonable, are apposite. What indeed is inappropriate for the learned?

उद्धव उवाच ॥

प्रकृतिः पुरुषश्चोभौ यद्यप्यात्मविलक्षणौ ॥

अन्योन्यापान्त्रयात्कृष्णं दृश्यते न भिदा तयो ॥

प्रकृतौ लक्ष्यते ह्यात्मा प्रकृतिश्च तथात्मनि ॥ २६ ॥

Uddhava said

26 O Krishna, though the Prakṛiti and the Purusha are mutually distinct<sup>1</sup> by their very nature yet their distinction is not perceived as they are never found apart. The Atman, verily, is seen in the Prakṛiti,<sup>2</sup> and likewise the Prakṛiti in the Atman.

[1 Distinct—one being sentient and the other insentient.]

[2 Prakṛiti—i.e. its effect, the body. They are mixed up and perceived as the I.]

एव मे पुण्डरीकाक्ष महान्तं संशयं हृदि ॥

छेत्तुमर्हसि सर्वज्ञ चक्षोर्मिर्नयनैः पुणैः ॥ २७ ॥

27 O Lotus-eyed, Omniscient Lord, Thou shouldst dispel this great doubt in my heart with words skilled in reasoning.

त्वत्तो ज्ञानं हि जीवानां प्रमोदस्तेऽत्र शक्तिः ॥

त्वमेव ह्यात्ममायाया गतिं वेत्थ न चापरः ॥ २८ ॥

28 It is from Thee that people get illumination and from Thy Power<sup>1</sup> it is that they are robbed of it. Thou



alone knowest the course of Thy inscrutable Power, and none else

[1 Power—Maya]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

प्रकृतिः पुरुषश्चेति विकल्प. पुरुषर्षभ ॥

एष वैकारिक. सर्गो गुणव्यतिकरात्मक. ॥ २६ ॥

The Lord said

29 O best of men, the Prakṛiti and the Puruṣha are entirely distinct<sup>1</sup> entities. This projected universe is subject to modifications, for it has sprung from a disturbance among the Guṇas

[1 Distinct—This distinction is brought out first by describing the ever changing nature of the Prakṛiti in this and the next two verses]

ममाङ्ग माया गुणमयनेकधा विकल्पबुद्धीश्च गुणैर्विधत्ते ॥

वैकारिकस्त्रिविधोऽध्यात्ममेकमथाधिदैवमधिभूतमन्यत् ॥ ३० ॥

30 My friend, My inscrutable Power, consisting of the Guṇas, creates through these Guṇas innumerable modifications and ideas relating thereto. Even though subject to all sorts of modifications, yet the universe is, broadly speaking, threefold<sup>1</sup>—one pertaining to the body, another to the gods, and a third to the creatures

[1 Threefold—This will be expanded in the next verse]

दृश्यूपमाकं च पुरत्र रन्ध्रे परस्परं सिध्यति यः स्वतः खे ॥

आत्मा यदेवामपरो य आद्यः स्वयानुभूत्याखिलसिद्धासिद्धः ॥

एव त्वगादि श्रवणादि चक्षुर्जिह्वादि नासादि च चित्तयुक्तम् ॥ ३१ ॥

31 The eye,<sup>1</sup> the form, and the solar rays penetrating the eye-ball,—these depend<sup>2</sup> upon one another for their manifestation, but the sun which is in the sky exists independently<sup>3</sup>. Because the Atman<sup>4</sup> is the primeval cause of these,<sup>5</sup> it is distinct from them. By Its self-effulgence It is the Illuminer of all those that help to manifest one another. Similarly<sup>6</sup> with reference to the skin, the ear, the eye, the tongue, the nose, and the mind, etc

1 *The Lge &c*—exemplifying respectively the three aspects spoken of in verse 30

2 *Depend &c*—We see the form and infer the other two factors in its perception

3 *Independently*—It does not require any support and is not affected by the defects of the latter

4 *Atman &c*—This distinctive character of the Purusha is being pointed out. It is the only unchanging Self-sufficient Principle

5 *These*—three divisions of the universe

6 *Similarly &c*—Each of these has its triangular relation with two other things. For example the skin has got touch and air, the ear sound and the quarters the tongue, taste and Varuna the nose smell and the Arjuna Chitta, object of recognition and Vâsudeva Manas object of cogitation and the moon, Buddhi object of determination and Brahmâ and Egoism object of identification and Rudra ]

(To be continued)

## THE SUMMER YOGA CLASS AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA

Nestled among the beautiful hills of sunny California, adorned with the wealth of myriad wild flowers, there is a quiet holy spot where Nature has implanted a bit of her soul in each tree rock and flower. Even the zephyrs that blow there whisper in soft cadence the eternal Om and birds sing as if to burst their feathered throats in the joy of this hushed spot.

Is it any wonder then that those favoured mortals who have been privileged to visit and dwell for a time in this garden of Mother cannot find words to describe all that they find welling in their heart for expression?

In June 1925, Swami Prakashananda called a large class of students to this beautiful retreat for a month of study aspiration and enlightenment. How blessed was this group! Mother spoke through all Her aspects in the heart of each one there.

Now She chided or dragged from its dark retreat some forgotten vice and cast it before our eyes so that we might 'see ourselves as others see us'. Then She

gave us love and sympathy, or forced pride, jealousy or rebellion out of some forgotten corner to smother it the next moment with courage and loyalty. The most subtle sin She dragged mercilessly before our eyes that we might in shame discard our pride and egotism and humbly and charitably grow in love and reverence. But always the Christ Child dwelt there, the living embodiment and example of selfless love and compassion, that in its purity can in one moment kill that which enslaves, and in the next inspire the noblest patience and courage, both with equal loving kindness.

There is no sword so sharp as the sword of love to cut the festering sin from an enslaved character and no balm so soothing as a glimpse of that Divine Love-light even as it cuts from your heart forever some secretly cherished sin. Agony becomes as joy and joy as agony, and all is swallowed in aspiration to reach the highest purity.

The Ashrama is ideally located for a Peace Retreat, set as it is in the hills. It is surrounded with them like an enormous basin. Off the highways, distant from the trains, it is completely away from all the distractions and turmoil and noise of the world. The holy peace of the Ashrama sinks in deep silence, and in a few days the mind becomes calm and ceases to feel hurried and rushed. Thus it can more clearly reflect the Spirit within, and meditations in such peace and tranquillity bring Divine Mother very close.

In the centre of the Ashrama grounds is what is called the Meditation Cabin, in which is an inspiring picture of Sri Ramakrishna, also one of the Holy Mother, and many smaller pictures of the Swamis. And although all the Ashrama is blessed and filled with high spiritual forces, yet this Cabin seems to be an especial focus for them. It was indeed an inspiration to enter this Sanctuary and meditate.

The month was a busy one. Every evening at five-thirty the blowing of the horn would awaken the whole Ashrama to prepare the students for morning meditation.

## THE BASIS OF INDIAN NATIONAL UNITY

If India is to rise as one nation, her leaders should try to find out the common ground in which all her people may meet and fight with a common end in view. Otherwise disruptive forces may at any time be let loose and break the dream of a united India. Critics who view Indian aspirations with neglect and contempt are heard very often to say that it will ever be a foolish hope for a population of more than 300 millions, speaking as many as 200 dialects and belonging to so many contending faiths, to unite together. Really, if some common meeting-points are not discovered the hope of Indian national unity will ever remain illusive.

If we observe closely we find that the factors which go to fuse together a number of people into one nation are geographical position, centralised government, common language and common religion and culture. Now, to have a united India, we must take advantage of the one or more of these factors.

The geographical position of India guarded by seas and walled by mountains is peculiarly suited to unite her people. But, it may be said, throughout the history of India, excepting for two or three times, we have not seen a united India and that has been done under the aegis of centralised government. To keep a people united on the basis of one government cannot, however, be hoped to last for a long time. For, as soon as the central government becomes weak or breaks up, the centrifugal forces are invariably at work. At the present time, a common fate under a common government has, no doubt, gone a great way to create a common interest amongst the people of all the provinces, but we cannot say that disintegrating factors are wholly absent. For many incidents of contemporary history characterised by jealousy, heart-burning and rivalry may be cited, and they can be traced to a spirit of provincialism. This clearly shows that although the provinces on occasions meet in one platform, they are not altogether disinterested.

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A theory has recently been started to create a much surer bond of fellowship amongst the people of different denominations by bringing into existence a *lingua franca*. A common language and a common script may serve as a means of understanding one another better, but it is doubtful whether a created *lingua franca* can ever take the place of the mother tongue, so that it may give rise to an idea of essential unity.

The last thing that we may turn to is a common culture and a common religion. A critical student of Indian history will surely find that this is the one point, where we can meet together and be one with love and sympathy for one another. A man from the furthest corner of Assam will unhesitatingly embrace a Tamilian at Kanyakumari or Hardwar as brother, because both draw the sustenance of their inner life from the same source, viz., one culture. Again a Gujrati and a Bengalee, when abroad, cannot but feel proud, if they are to be proud of anything when they remember that they have got one culture at their back. Now, along with others this common cultural basis will serve as a great cementing factor to keep together the disintegrating molecules of the Indian body politic, and we think this is the point where great stress should be given.

India, indeed, has been the chief seat or birthplace of as many as five religions out of the eight great religions of the world. But of all countries, India has shown the way how different faiths may have a common meeting ground and live together with mutual respect and tolerance. Of course, India has been from very ancient times the battlefield of many conflicting cultures, but by dint of her innate strength she has been able, in the long run, to assimilate them and evolve a unique culture. Though we find, at the present moment, many warring factors likely to disintegrate India, we cannot be altogether without any hope that they may be led to one direction, where all conflicts will cease and peace will arise for the good of India, and for the good of humanity.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

PUDUR (VANIVAMBADI)

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great success at the Ramakrishna Math, Pudur, Vanivambadi on the 23rd of August, 1925. The morning programme consisted of Bhajan and music. After that a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna tastefully decorated with flowers was taken in a procession through some of the principal streets of the town. Special worship and Homa were performed in the Math chapel, and the feeding of about 1500 Dandra Narayanas in the Math compounds was a special feature of the day's function. This was followed by a meeting in the afternoon held under the presidency of Mr V. Shanmuga Mudaliar, a leading merchant of the place. The President delivered an interesting lecture dealing with the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna and of his disciple Swami Vivekananda. Mr K. S. Lakshmanswami Iyengar read in English an instructive paper on 'Vivekananda the Man and his Message.' With a vote of thanks to the Chair, Arati and distribution of Prasad, the meeting terminated.

GAUHATI (ASSAM)

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Gauhati, on the 2nd of August last with due pomp and solemnity. Among other features of the celebration a meeting held at the local Town Hall with Mr T. R. Phookan, the well-known popular leader of Assam, in the chair, deserves mention. Mr I. K. Prasanta Murti spoke at length on 'Universal Religious Union,' showing the contribution of the great Swamiji in this direction. The Chairman called upon the youngmen of the country in the name of Swamiji to be up and doing with muscles of iron and nerves of steel and take up the national cause of selfless service. The meeting dissolved with usual formalities.

Prabuddha Bharata

चक्षुषत नायत



प्राप्य वरान्निषीधत ।

Katha Upa 1 iii 4

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOL XXX. DECEMBER, 1925. No 12.

TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

9th January, 1921

‘ Do not ruffle the mind Did you not, only the other day, come from Calcutta? If you go now, it will be setting a bad example Control the mind, be not controlled by it Surrender yourself to Him alone, your everything,—your body, mind and soul ’—Thus said the Swami to one who sat before him, and then sang a song of Ram-prasad, which said ‘ O my Mind-bird, why fly from tree to tree tasting different fruits? Make thy eternal nest on One who can offer thee the Greatest Fruit ’

The conversation then turned on the power of the Mantra The Swami said ‘ Yes, one can cure disease by the power of the mystic formulas But by His will, I have learnt to have greater faith in Him who is back of that power ’

D— said “ Kindly so make my mind that I may not feel even the difference of her sex when I see a woman ”

He replied 'Look to the Atman, not to the body Practise to have the mind ever fixed on the Atman.' He then quoted from the Gita 'One gets attached to objects by constantly thinking of them. From attachment comes longing, and from longing anger.'

And he said 'Anger is a concentrated form of lust. It makes one lose one's head completely. Lust does not so absolutely overwhelm the mind. Never think of transient things. That way you can escape attachment.'

The books say that a woman has eight times more lust than a man. If it be so, it is perhaps due to her being dependent on man. She has to please her husband, and having no other means, she takes to that alone. Once I mentioned this to an American lady. She flared up and said 'It is men who force us to such things. They are the least spiritual.'

Once in America, a lady came to see me. I at once divined her mind and asked her if she had anything to tell me. She was very glad that I understood her. I took her aside. She told me that her husband was very sensual, but she herself had not the least inclination for that sort of life. She said 'I allow my husband freedom to go to whomsoever he likes, only let him not trouble me.' To that I replied 'You are very nice! You started life together, and now you want to drive him away! Live with him and try to reform him by your advice.' She burst out crying at my words,—she understood. And though for a time they lived together, she could not hold on to the last. She separated, but never married again.

'In America men work very hard, they necessarily seek enjoyment in reaction. And they have no other idea of enjoyment than that. Hence it is that they are so excessively lustful. The women labour less and are more intellectual. Therefore perhaps they have less of the sex impulse.'

There, I was once repeatedly sent for by a woman. She was the mistress of a man who was a perfect rogue.

and would not allow her to go out. She begged me earnestly to go and see her once. She persuaded the man to allow my visit. He agreed on the express understanding that the interview would take place in his presence. He sat a little apart, and the woman came out of her room and shook hands with me. I stood up, and holding her by the hand for about five minutes, I *willed* that her mind be purified and have pure tendencies. We then sat down side by side and chatted for sometime without minding the least the man. The man became furious and exclaimed 'You should know this is America.' 'What of that?' I said, 'I know it is America.' The effect of this visit was astonishing. The woman overcame his influence and having extricated herself from his hold, went and lived apart. She had said after the handshake 'I am filled, my difficulties are solved. I feel that I am pure, I have known what woman is.'

"The Lord endows religious teachers with a special power which descends through the succession of disciples. Or why, if they are only like common men, should people seek them? It is to do His own work that He so endows the preachers. But if they utilise the power for selfish purposes, they are deprived of it. Other powers such as oratory and the like may remain, but the saving power departs from them."

To a question, the Swami replied "Yes, the power survives even the completion of the work for which God granted it. Only it wanes a little. But by misuse it is completely lost. Oh the tremendous will power I used to feel then! It is all His wondrous play!"

He quoted from the sixth chapter of the Gita, interspersing the recitation with beautiful and illuminating comments

"Having in a cleanly spot established his seat,—firm, neither too high nor low, made of a cloth, a skin and Kusha grass, arranged in consecution,—and having seated on that seat, making the mind one-pointed and subduing the action of the imagining faculty and the senses, let him practise Yoga for the purification of the heart." "Through

whatever reason, the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from that, bring it under the subjugation of the Self alone

With unflagging perseverance the mind must be again and again brought back to the Atman. It is the nature of the mind to be fickle and restless, like a naughty child that has to be pulled back by the ear to its studies. The mind must be carried even beyond the Buddhi, the determinative faculty, directly to the Atman. Of course, repeated and incessant efforts are necessary, but at last the mind will come under your control and remain calmly fixed on the Atman. At first you are to transcend Tamas, then Rajas, and finally you are to go beyond even Sattwa itself. Then you realise the Self as pervading everything. You find that He alone exists, nothing else. And that is called the state of Transcendental Consciousness.

The senses, the mind and the intellect,—we shall have to capture all these outposts of consciousness, and thereby conquer lust. Lust, anger and avance, these are but different forms of the same thing. They are the eternal enemies of the Jnani and destroyers of knowledge and wisdom.

“Join the senses to the Lord. the eyes shall see His image only, and whatever has to be eaten, must be His Prasad. That is the way to teach the senses their right lesson.

Medicine is doing me little good. The fact is I am fulfilling my own Karma, and when that will end, this body also will perish.”

D—referred to the stories of Sri Ramakrishna bringing about sudden transformations in the lives of drunkards and characterless men. At that the Swami said. Yes, these are all true. To some, however, he would allow an interval, as to Girish Babu. ‘Enjoy yourself,’ he would say to him. you won’t croak long now that you have been bitten by a poisonous serpent. There is the story of Suresh Babu, long after he had known Sri Ramakrishna, being tempted one evening, on his way from his office, to visit a public woman. He went upstairs and entered

the woman's room But lo, there was no woman, but Sri Ramakrishna himself standing there ! In great shame, he fled from the place "

This reminded the Swami of the episode of Jaimini and Vyasa Jaimini, as a precaution, had warned the girl that the place was haunted by a ghost, and she must on no account open the door, even though the voice calling her might be his own Thus it was that though he, in his passion, entreated her to admit him into her room, the door never opened All night he stood sleepless at the door, and in the morning he found no girl but Vyasadeva himself within the room

"If you touch the Atman, you are safe "

OCCASIONAL NOTES

Those who read newspapers and keep abreast with the current of world-events might have heard about the famous trial of Tennessee, U S A It has created quite a stir and sensation all over the civilised world and has become a topic of the day It has given a rude shock to the sentiments of all scientists and of those who advocate the freedom of thought and opinion In these days of scientific advancement and the progress of democratic and liberal ideas, it is not only astounding but extremely deplorable that a school teacher should be arrested and convicted on a charge of teaching children the theory of evolution that forms one of the corner-stones of modern science The long and short of the case is as follows Mr John Scopes, the accused, who fell a victim to the fanaticism and bigotry of an orthodox section of the Christian church, was a teacher in a high school at Dayton, a town in the Tennessee state He was prosecuted on the grounds that he used a text-book called 'A Civic Biology' that deals among others with the theory of evolution Taking advantage of a preposterous law of the state which nobody thought would ever be enforced like many other dead

letter laws, the fundamentalists, that conservative section of Christians who consider the Bible to be a revelation and as such every word of it to be literally true, prosecuted the innocent school teacher. There was the farce of a trial in a court of law, and the man was found guilty and fined 100 dollars.

Before we enter into any academical discussion as to the scientific and philosophical validity of the doctrine of evolution, what strikes us most is that this trial is one of those instances that are a menace to the freedom of men. For, this trial betrays a spirit that will not allow a man to think independently and give expression to his ideas. It proves conclusively that a man is not safe if his ways of thinking happen to differ from the accepted notions. And if he persists in presenting things that are strange and thus not palatable to many—at least the influential majority, he will have a bad time of it. Does not this forebode a very bad future for original research and thinking? So far as we understand, freedom is the primary condition of growth. But for its development, individual and collective, is sure to become stunted. Every unit of a social organism must be given the legitimate scope to grow of course not in violation of the general health of the system as a whole. Otherwise, there is every chance that the organism itself will become diseased and atrophied. A state entrusted with the welfare of its citizens should not curb the freedom of individuals, if this freedom does not prove to be positively injurious. It should rather see that all its individual members get full opportunities for a free expression of their respective talents. Sometimes it may happen that a man will come out who will appear abnormal in his views and opinions. But that is no reason why he should not be encouraged and allowed to have his own way. He may differ from the majority. But who knows that what he wants to propound and present before society is not correct and beneficial? Only time can prove that.

Perhaps the students of sociology will agree when we say that the mass mind is generally conservative and is lazy to move save in its old grooves. Hence it rebels at anything that seems to be new to it. Thus there has always been a war between the genius and the multitude, in which the former being in the minority has often had to suffer an apparent defeat at the outset. Let us look at the pages of history for the illustration of our point. We find there copious instances of intellectual and spiritual giants who have been flouted, persecuted and even put to death, because of their special messages which the people were not ready to accept at the time. Socrates, the wisest man of his times, was made to drink the fatal cup of hemlock, because he promulgated doctrines that were much ahead of his age. Galileo, the great scientist, was compelled to withdraw his statement that the earth is not stationary but moves round the sun. Copernicus, the celebrated astronomer, had to run for his life for stating some scientific truths which were unintelligible to his contemporaries. Columbus was hooted out as a madman by the Council of Padua 'for pretending that it is possible to circumnavigate the globe.' Above all, Jesus, the Nazarene, the founder of Christianity, was crucified by his countrymen for his divine message. We need not multiply instances. What we have already cited will be enough to show the psychology of the generality of people. They lack in breadth of vision and proceed at a snail's pace in their ideas. They cannot tolerate others who seem to be peculiar to them. But as it has always happened, truth under all circumstances is bound to triumph in the end. Nothing on earth can thwart its progress. As it is impossible to cover the rays of the blazing sun by the palm of one's hand, truth cannot be suppressed. Against countless odds it will have its way and shine by its own light illumining everything that falls on its path. Hence if there be any truth in the message of a genius, it cannot be lost by any temporary check or persecution. Perhaps it will gain all the more by the very sufferings and sacrifice of its master and overcome all difficulties.

Orthodoxy, bigotry and superstition had their days in the past in the dark ages. Now at this twentieth century when we are at the height of civilisation, culture and scientific progress, one naturally expects that they will have less sway over the minds of the people. But the Tennessee case, implying as it does an organised attempt to obstruct individual growth by putting all sorts of meaningless conventions and dogmas as barriers in the paths of young people receiving education in schools, has belied our expectation. It shows that even a progressive country like America has not as yet been able to free herself of ecclesiastical fanatics who taking advantage of the influential position they hold in the state, are exploiting the credulity of the ignorant people by asking them to believe all sorts of dogmas that have no scientific basis. Of course, the party, viz. the fundamentalists, who are responsible for the introduction of the preposterous law at Tennessee and the prosecution of the school master, have their own arguments, however plausible and specious to justify their conduct. The doctrine of evolution, they say, is a theory that goes against the teachings of the Bible and is thus inimical to the religion preached by Jesus. Now, if it is taught in schools, children will learn to question the inerrancy of the Bible and refuse to take every word of it as gospel truth without due examination and critical analysis. It will in this way undermine the very foundation of Christianity. Christian schools maintained by Christian tax-payers have no right to train Christian boys and girls into heretics. Thus do the fundamentalists plead their cause.

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But what does the theory of evolution say, and how is it in conflict with the Bible? According to it the present world with all the varieties of plant and animal species it contains is the result of a slow process of development covering a period of millions of years and has not been made as it is all at once. And this process has been on the whole from lower to higher, from homo-

geneous to heterogeneous, from inorganic to organic, from lifeless to living, forms. Thus interpreted, man who may be called the acme of the evolutionary process and the highest manifestation of life and consciousness, is not made in the image of God, complete and full-grown, but has come to be what he is from a crude state. As a species, perhaps, he has for his immediate ancestor the monkey or the anthropoid ape. This doctrine of the gradual genesis of the world and the species of living creatures inhabiting it contradicts the theory of special creation as given in the Bible, according to which everything, lifeless or living, has been fashioned by the Almighty as it is all at once out of nothing. The Biblical representation of a series of special acts of creation being contradicted, the whole system of doctrines built on the fall of Adam and Eve, the first ancestors of man, is destroyed. The fundamentalists argue "No fall, no real problem of sin, no sin, no need of salvation, no salvation, no Divine Redeemer, and so no Christianity." Hence it is that the fundamentalists, eager to hold their own position, are up in arms against the evolutionists.

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The idea of this world being manufactured out of nothing all at once is neither scientific nor philosophically tenable. Although there is a difference of opinion as to the details of the theory of evolution, almost all scientists agree that the history of the world is a history of a slow and gradual development. Evidences of this are to be found in the structure of the earth and the remains of extinct species of plants and animals which had appeared on earth and lived for ages, but died out being supplanted by more highly organised types. A vast period of time must have elapsed before this earth and its inhabitants could attain their present forms. The condensation of the suns and planets, the cooling and hardening of the earth into a solid sphere, the formation of the earth's surface into mountains, valleys, rivers, seas and oceans, and the appearance and disappearance of the different species of

plants and animals—all these changes that are supposed to have taken place are possible only if we recognise a slow process of evolution going on for a long period of time. As it is not within our province, we shall leave this scientific aspect of the question to experts and consider next the philosophical validity of the theory of evolution as distinguished from the crude conception of the doctrine of special creation

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Ex nihilo nihil fit—is a logical dictum full of sense. It means that something cannot come out of nothing. A positive entity cannot have void for its cause. The law of causation which governs the phenomenal world requires that every effect must have a cause. A causeless effect or an accident that we loosely use for a phenomenon whose origin cannot be traced, is a chimera. It has no place in the economy of nature. It has neither subjective nor objective existence. Thus understood what we call an effect is nothing but the cause reproduced. In other words, what was at first involved as a cause becomes evolved as an effect. The huge oak, with its big trunk, spreading branches and innumerable leaves that can give shelter to thousands of people under its shade, was present in a subtle form in the acorn. It has nothing in it that was not in the acorn, though this fact may appear physically impossible to a man of ordinary understanding. Not only is this law of causation applicable to individual cases, it holds equally good collectively to species and to the group of phenomena called the world. This world that is a conglomeration of manifold types of plants and animals is, collectively speaking, a product and must therefore have a cause from which it has evolved step by step. To say that it has come out of nothing is to deny an axiomatic truth the validity of which cannot be doubted even as the fact that 2 plus 2 makes 4.

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Besides, there is a strong theological proof in support of the theory of evolution. Let us take for example the

human race It contains individuals of such varied types and grades of mental and spiritual growth that it becomes inexplicable unless we bring in the doctrine of Karma and the law of gradual progress How are we to account for the fact that one man is a saint and another a scoundrel, one an intellectual prodigy and another an idiot, one miserable and another happy? To say that this differentiation is all due to the sweet will and caprice of God, the Creator, is no answer If you make God responsible for this differentiation, He becomes an imperfect God, guilty of partiality and inequality of treatment, and all the attributes of supreme love, truth, justice etc that we apply to Him become meaningless Such a God is no better than a human autocrat ruling by whims and as such is not an ideal worth striving for Under the rule of such a God there will be a regular anarchy No man will have any faith in the moral and spiritual laws, and the ascendancy of the forces of evil will make this world a hell The doctrine of Karma which is nothing but an aspect of the law of causation satisfactorily explains this differentiation as no other theory does Every man is the architect of his own present state as well as of his future By good Karma, perhaps done in previous lives, a saint has simply unfolded the saintly potentialities that he had He is not a freak of nature or an accident All these proofs go to invalidate the theory of special creation

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But can we not interpret the Bible in a different light, so as to make it consistent with the accepted principles of science? The words of the Bible, we think, need not be taken literally, giving equal emphasis upon everything that it contains Like all other scriptures it has essentials and non-essentials, eternal truths and changing forms and dogmas, fundamental principles of morality and religion as well as mythologies Thus one portion of it is infallible and useful for all times, the other is not so Like all other literatures, revealed or man-made, the Bible has passed through a process of evolution For, in it

we find so many things that cannot otherwise be reconciled and put together consistently. The primitive picture of the ancient Hebrew traditions, the ethical doctrines of the prophets, the religion of temple and sacrifice, the sublime message of Jesus, the elaborate theology as promulgated by St. Paul, Christianity as represented in the fourth gospel and so forth—all these occur there. It is impossible to combine all these into a systematic whole unless we recognise that the Bible is a complex literature that has issued out of the long development of the Hebrew and Christian religions, having in it elements varying from the naive, grotesque and crude forms of worship and ritual to the superb life and teachings of Jesus.



The life and teachings of Jesus may be said to be the highest fulfilment of the Bible and are the foundations on which has been built the superstructure called Christianity. Hence by Christianity is meant, truly speaking, that great ethical religion which may be summed up as the practice of those cardinal virtues, which is essential to a strictly moral and spiritual life, and it is exemplified in the unique personality of Jesus. It consists, in other words, in realising our perfect nature by a true knowledge of our place and function in the world-order and our relation to God, the Heavenly Father. The God preached by Jesus is not a *deus ex machina*, for He is our very life and essence.

In Him we live and move and have our being. The anthropomorphic idea of an extra-cosmic God creating this world out of nothing by a single act of volition and ruling His creatures by rewards and punishments as it occurs in the Book of Genesis, cannot be fathered upon Christianity. It is noticeable that in the New Testament there has been a regular evolution of the idea of God from a crude deism to panentheism, and this panentheism means that God is immanent and at the same time transcendent.

'I and the Father are one'—says Christ. This statement clearly indicates a relation subsisting between

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God and ourselves which may be called unity in variety. Hence not only is it possible with regard to Christ, the chosen man of God, it can be realised by every one of us in a supreme state of blessedness and communion. "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," says the Bible. It signifies that perfection that we are to attain to is our birthright. It is our essence, the very part and parcel of our life. Not that something extra will be superadded to us when we shall be perfect, but there will be an unfoldment of our real nature, which is veiled by ignorance. This is what we understand by Christianity.

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The time has come when religion should shake hands with science in a spirit of fellowship. The feeling of enmity and quarrel that has created to-day a yawning gulf separating the one from the other must give way to one of mutual confidence, and they should unite as friends and help each other towards the realisation of a common end which is Truth. So far as we understand, the whole conflict is due to a misconception that is bound to disappear with a better knowledge and understanding of each other's function and province. Though there may be a difference as to their methods, both science and religion, it may be proved, aim at one thing, viz. Truth. The goal that religion places before us is, truly speaking, not different from the final conclusion arrived at by science. They are but different views of the same thing from different perspectives. The recent discoveries of science establishing the unity of life and consciousness and the existence of one Ultimate Principle permeating the whole universe conclusively prove what we say. When the Vedic seers declared with a voice of thunder that the Reality is one, and It is Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, they simply foreshadowed by their intuitive vision the final synthesis of science yet to be made. Hence what we want to emphasise is that no religion which is based upon a rational basis and is progressive and liberal

has any reason to be afraid of science. It is only the dogmatic and hide bound religion of the church and the temple that considers itself to be at stake and raises a false note of alarm at the progress of science.

## PRACTICAL VEDANTA \*

By SWAMI SHARVANANDA

श्लोकार्खेण प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभि  
 ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापर ॥

— 'What has been spoken in volumes, I shall express in half a verse. Brahman alone is true, the phenomenal world is false, and the Jiva or the individual soul is no other than Brahman.' Thus did one of our ancient sages put in a nutshell the entire truth of the Vedanta philosophy. You may say that it is easy to declare in so many words the unreality of this world and the reality of a strange entity called Brahman, but to the majority of people Brahman is only a word having no significance in life. For, it is unknown and unknowable to them, whereas the world of phenomena which is said to have no permanence is so very real and tangible, yielding the satisfaction of the senses. The aforesaid statement of Vedanta is thus against the evidence of direct experience. It is something like asking one to believe a thing which one does not see to exist and to deny the existence of that which one does actually see or feel. In reply the scriptures will say that this is the Truth, nay the only Truth, though hard to realise. 'The path to realisation is as perilous as walking upon the sharp edge of a razor blade.' One among millions succeeds and gets a vision of the Ideal after countless births of strenuous Sadhana. As the Lord Sri Krishna says in the Gita—'One, perchance in thousands of men, strives for perfection, one,

\* Notes of a lecture delivered in Bombay

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perchance among the blessed few who strive, knows Me in reality "

It is a fact of common experience that this world which we consider to be so real cannot give us any permanent satisfaction or joy. In this big city of Bombay which has got a population of about eleven lacs of men and women, if you go from house to house and ask individually every inmate whether he is happy—whether he is perfectly satisfied with his life, I dare say you will not get half a dozen people who would say 'Yes'. Almost everyone has something to complain of and being dissatisfied with his present position is trying to improve his lot, so that he may be happy. Happiness, pure and unmixed, is indeed very rare in this world. Earthly objects that contribute to our pleasure are short-lived and evanescent. As it is, how can we say that this worldly life will have an abiding interest for man? Only that may be said to have a permanent value which lasts through eternity and does not undergo any change or modification at any time. The human mind naturally wants something which remains unchanged in this world of flux, which endures while all other things go to decay. This Unchanged Reality is what we call Brahman or Truth by realising which we can transcend the limitations of the phenomenal life and attain Immortality.

While speaking of the truth of Vedanta, of course I mean Advaita Vedanta, I believe it is the culmination of human knowledge and aspiration. Beyond that we cannot go or hope to go. Not only is it theoretically the rationale of all philosophy, it is also extremely practical, for it comes within the scope of direct experience. That Brahman alone is real and the world false is a matter not of mere intellectual interest but of actual realisation. There may be persons who are well-versed in the Vedantic lore and can establish to others the Vedantic doctrine by the force of arguments. But it is all useless unless one lives the actual life. Intellectually it may be easy to grasp the truths of the Vedanta philosophy, but to make them the part and parcel of our life is very difficult. This is why

a systematic course of intense Sadhana or spiritual discipline is necessary. What happens ordinarily is that when the subconscious mind is not tinged with the same hue as that of the conscious mind, a particular thought cannot have any lasting effect upon our practical life. Many of us are conscious of this truth, but cannot bring the Ideal to bear upon our actual life, because the impressions that are latent in our subconscious mind-stuff are too strong for us to overcome. It is Sadhana by means of which we can hope to do it. Sadhana is the process by which the entire mind, conscious or subconscious, can be brought within our control and directed towards the realisation of the Ideal.

The Vedanta prescribes a fourfold course of Sadhana to be gone through systematically under the guidance of an able teacher who has got the Illumination. First is the practice of dispassion and renunciation of enjoyment, here and hereafter. It is the desire for enjoyment that takes us away from the Ideal and makes us run for temporal things. We want what is pleasing to our senses, we seek wealth, we long for name and fame, and we look forward to a happy enjoyable life after death. But all these, however attractive are vanities, they cannot give us permanent satisfaction which is obtainable only in the unchangeable Brahman. It is a truth that darkness and light cannot live together. If you want light, you must give up darkness. If you want to go to the east, you must recede from the west. In a cinematograph you must withdraw your gaze from the moving pictures if you want to have a full idea of the background that holds the shifting scenes. Similarly, in the spiritual life the renunciation of desire, the root-cause of all mental distractions, is essential, and one cannot renounce unless there be a dispassion for the objects of desire.

The second course is the practice of discrimination of the Real from what is unreal. It is essential in order to strengthen our dispassion. Many get disgusted with life when they get hard blows from nature in the shape of trials and difficulties, misfortunes and bereave-

ments They then feel that this world with all its wealth of enjoyment is shallow and worthless and cannot give them the strength and peace they stand most in need of But this feeling will not be lasting until and unless it were established on a clear conception of what is permanent and what is impermanent It often happens that the mother loses all her interest for the world and becomes disconsolate when her dearest child is snatched away by the cruel hand of death But this grief and dispassion pass away in course of time, and she seems to forget everything and reconciling herself to her lot reverts to the worldly ways

The third course consists in the practice of the six ethical virtues of mental equanimity, self-control and so forth Balance is essential to the disciplining of the mind which is so restless and wayward in its nature We should try to remain unruffled under all circumstances, in pain or pleasure, misery or happiness We lose our mental equipoise and feel miserable or happy, because we identify ourselves with our body and the environment with which we are surrounded The mental balance requires a full restraint of the senses which have a natural tendency to go out and create distraction What makes a man different from a brute is this virtue of self-control Of all animals it is man who has the power to curb his senses and engage them as he wills Therein lies his speciality But it cannot be denied that the majority of mankind have become dehumanised by becoming slaves to their passions and allowing their senses to lead them as they like This internal slavery is worse than physical bondage, for it is more painful Next comes the practice of forbearance So long as we are in this world, we cannot avoid unpleasant or adverse circumstances. They upset us and make our life miserable unless we put up with them and struggle calmly and patiently for the realisation of the Ideal Along with the practice of forbearance we must also have the virtue of withdrawing the mind from external objects and fixing it on the Ideal The mind of an ordinary sense-bound man is full of dross and

impurity, it cannot reflect the Truth until and unless it is made pure. We cannot see the bottom of a lake if its water is turbid and its surface is agitated by waves. The authentic real virtue is *Śraddhā* or faith in the words of the Guru and the scriptures. I think I need not speak much to you on the importance of *Śraddhā* in spiritual life, for it is one of the greatest requisites for the realisation of the Ideal. The position of a sceptic who questions his Guru or the authority of the scriptures at every step is miserable. He has none to show him the path, he stumbles and fails to reach the Goal.

The last course is the desire for emancipation. Everyone is more or less instinctively conscious of his bondage from his very birth. That is why he cries when he sees the light of day, and as he grows in years he complains when he is put under any restraint. Freedom is the birth-right of man, and he wants to be free in all ways. But as he often does not know the right channel, he goes here and there and suffers till at last experience and the longing for freedom bring him round to the real path. We must intensify this hankering after liberation and struggle to get beyond the pale of ignorance which is at the root of all evil. As I have said, mere intellectual knowledge will not help. We must undergo the course of *Sādhana*—the fourfold spiritual discipline, of which the desire for emancipation is the primary requisite for making the Vedāntic ideal real in life.

The Vedānta philosophy demands that it should be practised in life along with a theoretical knowledge of it. Herein lies the difference between the Indian and Western systems of thought. The latter is merely of speculative interest and tries to establish truth by force of intellect or reason. But man's reason as such is limited like his body—so how can one expect to grasp the Unlimited by means of what is limited? It is therefore that philosophers like Kant, Herbert Spencer and others who followed the path of reason have reached an adamant wall which they could not cross and see the Reality behind. Nowadays a new school of thought has come to the forefront


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in the West, I mean the school inaugurated by Bergson, the French philosopher, who has brought the doctrine of intuition in the domain of philosophy

But we must say even Bergson with his theory of intuition is not very explicit. His intuition is simply a finer modification of feeling or emotion and can only see things directly as such and do nothing more. It works under all the limitations as the reason does. Let us see what Bergson has to say on the subject. If you take all the possible photographs of Bombay and arrange them in a panoramic way, the series of pictures would not be Bombay itself. Similarly, the senses bring impressions from the external world, and the mind like a negative plate receives them. The universe we know of is simply a representation and not the Reality, however faithful it may be. The Reality to be truly perceived must be seen through a different faculty of the human mind which is intuition. The Reality being dynamic cannot come within the cognizance of the intellect which can only grasp things static in nature. It is the inner power of intuition that can see the Reality in its dynamic aspect. This is the sum and substance of Bergson's theory of intuition, and it is faulty and imperfect. Intuition if it be a modification of the mind cannot even give us a glimpse of what lies beyond mind—the consciousness itself. In order to realise that one must transcend mind and the categories of time, space and causation. It is not knowing but being and becoming where the individual and the Universal become one, and the duality of subject and object becomes annulled in the indivisible consciousness, called Samadhi. This supra-conscious state that will lead us to the realisation of Brahman is not an Utopian ideal. It has been realised in the past and can be verified to the letter here and now by any one whose mind has been perfectly disciplined and purified by a regular course of Sadhana as prescribed by the scriptures. Let us try to have that glorious state, and we shall get peace and blessedness that passeth all understanding.

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# THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

By SWAMI ADWAITANANDA

## II

The rebirth of the soul of India into a new national body must insist on the spiritual motive in every sphere of activity. Spirituality does not certainly mean that we shall regard mundane life as vanity, nor does it mean that the whole of the national mind will be moulded into a uniform shape. It does not mean belief in particular dogmas or the observance of definite forms of worship. Such an attempt would be quite impossible in a country full of the most diverse religious opinions and harbouring three such varied general forms as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion and all religions are really speaking, but sects of the one eternal religion which consists in the perception of the Divine within us. Further, real spirituality does not exclude anything whatsoever from its all-embracing fold. It gives free activity to reason, to science and philosophy, to the full satisfaction of the æsthetic being, to the health and vigour of the body, to the material well-being of man, to opulence, ease and comfort. Bareness and squalor are not the indispensable accompaniments of spirituality. They betray, on the contrary, a sad lack of that precious commodity. Nor is military, political and social subservience compatible with genuine spirituality. Freedom means all-sided freedom mental and physical.

There is a world of difference between the spiritual and the purely mental view of existence. The spiritual view holds that the mind and the body are the instruments of the Self, for Self-expression. It holds that the goal of life is the attainment of spotless freedom which consists in Self-realisation by self-transcendence. It does not look upon the development of mind and body as the

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final aim of man. This changes the whole outlook of man, and although it preserves all the mundane aims of life, it gives them a different value and puts them in their proper places.

Spirituality aims at the full development of mental, emotional and æsthetic parts of man, because they too are the expressions of the Spirit, and by neglecting them it neglects the Spirit in manifestation. From a spiritual point of view philosophy and science are but different ways of approach to the same Reality, from two opposite poles of our being. It does not stop at mere intellectual beliefs, although they may be completely satisfying. It uses philosophy and science as helps and goes far beyond them. It aims at the full health and vigour of the body, but does so, because it is part of the Dharma of the complete human living. The body is the basis for the discovery and expression of the Divine in man. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create realistic images of man and nature, but spiritually they become expressions of the deepest reality and of universal beauty. Politics, society and economy, from a spiritual point of view, become a frame work for the growth of the life within and an external embodiment of the law of spiritual being.

Europe is slowly but surely awakening to the idea that a mere rationalistic culture has no definite aim. It is taking in the Eastern ideas which are penetrating into her mentality, and trying to apply them to her conditions. It does not forswear science, democracy and progress, but aims at perfecting them by the light of this new knowledge. We too should be faithful to our traditions, and while receiving with open arms all that is best in Western culture should take care to see that our characteristic tendency and mode of thought are not abandoned. India can develop herself best and serve humanity by following scrupulously the law of her own nature. Religion means following the spiritual impulse in its fullness, seeing God everywhere, deifying everything, raising life in all its parts

to the divinest possible values. If we attach this meaning to the word religion we shall find that there is not too much but too little of religion in this country. We have to give to the age-long ideal of India a wider field, a more synthetic meaning so that each and every activity of the nation, each and every mode of expression, each and every noble and unifying motive becomes religion, and the whole life internal and external, assumes the form of the manifestation of the national soul. The philosophy, poetry art and science of the West are going in this direction more or less obscurely. India has the central key with her. She knows what spirituality is. She has got a clear conception of the goal, and she knows the ways and means of reaching it. She has only to undergo the necessary discipline on a more general scale and give a wider and a more comprehensive application to her ancient ideal, and she can be the light of the world and lead it out of the present mental chaos. This is her special mission. Her current literature her religious and philosophical movements, and her art clearly indicate that the Indian mind has begun to realise the nature of its special function—the enlightenment of humanity on the ways and means of the attainment of freedom from the thralldom of matter.

MAHATMA GANDHI

BY AN ADMIRER

The Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata has laid upon the present writer the duty of writing out some reflections concerning Mahatma Gandhi. To release himself from this onerous responsibility all sorts of loopholes and excuses have been exhausted, and as the Editor remains adamant in his original command, there is no alternative left but to do the best in one's power. There are many obvious reasons for the diffidence. In the first place, to understand contemporary men and events in a dis-

passionate way is rarely, if ever at all, successfully accomplished, for these persons are themselves actors or at best interested spectators. Still more difficult is the task of weighing men's motives and achievements and pronounce judgments upon their worth. In the second place, if the personalities under discussion are of such a type as to be unique, complex and too far above the normal, as is that of the Mahatma, one might more easily hope for success in the accomplishment of the classical impossibles beginning with the attempt to extract oil out of sand, and so forth.

When we consider the opinions and judgments on the Mahatma by responsible critics, both Indian and Western, we find that they are extremely varied and conflicting. To illustrate our point we shall just refer to some of these. Some regard him as 'a knight of the impossible,' a beautiful but ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in the void in vain,' 'a dangerous force playing with fire,' a faddist trying to imitate the prophet of old and bid the sun of progress stop in its course and go back. One Governor of a British province in the East calls him 'a dangerous and misguided saint.' An American magazine describes him as 'a monk who imperils British rule in India.' Another looks upon him as 'one of the great *might-have-beens* of Indian history.' This is, of course, one side of the picture. Let us look at the other. The Lord Bishop of Madras speaks thus of Mahatmajī: "I see in Mr. Gandhi the patient sufferer for the cause of righteousness and mercy, a truer representative of the Crucified Saviour than the men who have thrown him into prison and yet call themselves by the name of Christ." Dr. Annie Besant, once a declared opponent of Mahatmajī's movement, writes: "Among us, as I write, is dwelling for a brief space one whose presence is a benediction, and whose feet sanctify every house into which he enters—Gandhi, our martyr and saint. * * * As I stood for a moment facing him, hand clasped in hand, I saw in him that deathless spirit which redeems by suffering and in death wins life for others, one of those marked out for

the high service of becoming saviours and helpers of humanity. The Rt Hon ble Mr V S Sastri observes

His compassion and tenderness are infinite. The present writer stood by as he wiped the sores of a leper with the ends of his own garment. It is his complete mastery of the passions his realisation of the ideal of a Sannyasin in all the rigour of its Eastern conception which has crowned him with the title of Mahatma or the Great Soul'. The same writer says further on. The writer of these lines is not one of Mr Gandhi's political followers or a disciple of his in religion. But he claims to have known him for some years and to have been a sympathetic student of his teachings. He has felt when near him the chastening effects of a great personality. He has derived much strength from observing the workings of an iron will. He has learned from a living example something of the nature of Duty and the worship due to her. He has occasionally caught some dim perception of the great things that lie hidden below the surface and of the struggles and tribulations which invest life with its awe and grandeur. An ancient Sanskrit verse says. Do not tell me of holy waters, of stone images, they may cleanse us if they do after a long period. A saintly person purifies us at sight. Everyone is familiar with the famous sermons of the Rev J H Holmes on Mahatmaji, in one of which he says 'When I think of Gandhi, I think of Jesus Christ. He lives his life, he speaks his word, he suffers, strives and will some day nobly die for his kingdom upon earth. In the course of a sermon after the arrest of the Mahatma he says. Does not this prove him to be the Christ of our age? To-day, as in the olden times, it is no longer a question as to whether Christ is here or not. It is a question of who will recognise and follow'. The sweet singer of India, Srimati Sarojini Devi writes thus.

Let us not follow the conventional mode of the world and wait for a man to be dead to canonise him, but rather let our critical judgment confirm the unerring instinct of the people that recognises in Mahatma Gandhi a lineal descendant of those great sons of compassion who became

the servants of humanity—Gautama Buddha, Chaitanya, Ramanuja, Ramakrishna. He lacks, may be, the breadth and height and ecstasy of their mystical attainment, but he is not less than them in his intensity of love, his sincerity of service and a lofty simplicity of life which is the austere flower of his renunciation and self-sacrifice.

These are testimonies from persons whom all the world knows and respects, and who could by no means be considered prejudiced in his favour and called blind admirers. And they are enough to give one an idea of the vast complexity and the remarkable greatness of the personality of the Mahatma. After so much has been said on the subject, it would be as superfluous and foolish as to 'paint the lilies and colour the rainbow' to go about proving how closely the Mahatma answers to the definition of a 'Great Soul'. Nor is it necessary to discuss Mahatmaji's personal conviction and achievements in Ahimsa or non-violence which is the first article of his faith as well as the last article of his creed. It may be said that to him Ahimsa is not merely the negative virtue of not injuring any living being, whether in mind, speech or body, but it stands for the largest love and the greatest charity, necessarily implying truth and fearlessness. This love is identical with truth and is a dynamic power of the soul. He often repeats 'God is, even though the world deny Him. Truth stands even though there be no public support. It is self-sustained.' His religion is not formal religion or customary religion, but that which underlies all religions—a religion which brings man face to face with his Master. Perhaps, some wise readers would observe that all these are taught by our Sanatana Dharma, and for the matter of that by all the great religions of the world! Quite true! But they are only taught and seldom put in practice. The beauty of the life of the Mahatma lies in the fact that he applies these most rigorously to the details of everyday conduct and even to politics, in which field all the commandments of God—to judge by the actions of the statesmen and rulers of the civilised world—are not recognised at all, and if ever recognised are either

broken without any scruple or blanded forth to hood-wink the unwary

Mahatma speaks of himself thus 'Most religious men are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man. When he once accepts a principle, he will not yield an inch even to his dearest friends and not even when forced with the alternative of extreme unpopularity and a complete desertion by all his adherents. This much cannot be said of any public man or statesman of the past or in the present day. To what an extent he can carry his principles into practice is well illustrated by the following incident. When the late Mr Gokhale was his guest in South Africa, the Mahatma insisted upon doing all the menial tasks including even that of sweeping, and when it was suggested that somebody else might be given the task the reply he gave was typical of his attitude. He said that regarding any piece of work which had to be done, there was no highness or lowness about it, and if any work was thought to be too dirty for him (Gandhi), it should be regarded equally dirty and low even for any poor sweeper who was just as much a human being as he himself. Similarly in the case of the removal of untouchability, long before he began to preach it to the public, he adopted as his own daughter the Pariah girl Lakshmi, and it is well-known how even in the Yerrowada prison, almost the first question he would be asking of the visitor was—How Lakshmi is doing? Regarding his extreme sense of duty, we are told, that during his serious illness some years ago, his youngest son, who was then at Madras entrusted with the duty of the Hindi Prachar, went to the Satyagraha Ashrama in his natural anxiety and eagerness to meet the father. And how was he treated? He was rebuked for deserting his post of duty and immediately ordered to go back and take up the task. Whether the boy actually went back to Madras or not, it is at least characteristic of Mahatma to say so.

An incident illustrative of the extreme coolness and presence of mind of the Mahatma is that when a cobra


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fell upon him, he not only remained unmoved but asked others round him to do the same, and no wonder that the creature too quietly passed away. We have also heard people say as to what length he would carry his faith in Ahimsa. In the Ashrama, for example, if any inmate or member went wrong, far from punishing him what he would do was to pray, do penance, suffer and punish himself with the consequence that no member could dream of committing mistakes. Even if something untoward happened, the erring member would so entreat his 'Bapuji' or 'Father' (so he is affectionately called in the Ashrama and in most parts of Gujerat too) not to punish himself or prescribe some penance. There are so many such stories current about him, but space forbids any detailed recapitulation of them all here. We have simply contented ourselves by referring to a few only, and they reveal the most humane and soft sides of his wonderful personality.

How simple, natural and unaffected is Mahatmaji's conduct at all times can be judged from the following. The famous ultimatum to the Viceroy was being discussed at a meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress. The clock struck 5 p.m. which was his supper time. So all on a sudden with a sweet smile for an apology that the members might not mind it, he had his simple and frugal fare of a few slices of bread and goat's milk, and finishing that he resumed his discussion of the ultimatum. With one more and perhaps the crowning piece we must bring to a close these personal touches. It was a few months after the Nagpur Session of the Congress, where the capturing of the local bodies was adopted as one of the items of the programme. In the municipal elections of an important city in Gujerat, the non-co-operators captured as many as 80 per cent of the seats, and the local leaders wanted to consult the Mahatma and take his advice as to what should be done. Forthwith a deputation of half a dozen of prominent leaders started for the Satyagraha Ashrama and reached the place in due time. It was early morning, and they learnt that 'Bapuji' was

in the gymnasium of the school with the boys. The leaders in their eagerness would not wait, and they marched on there. What a sight! The man who is recognised as one of the greatest personalities of the world the Dictator of the Indian National Congress, was found sitting and playing on the sand surrounded by a group of tiny children who not only took him to be one of their own but seemed so delighted and charmed with him as to forget all about the outside world. Most picturesque was the scene of a little urchin perched on the shoulders of the Mahatma. As soon as the leaders entered the sacred place, they were greeted by a sweet smile from Mahatmaji and were quietly but peremptorily ordered to clear away. And he added as if in explanation of this apparent rudeness that it was a sin to stand there as the children would feel shy and lose their delight. This shows the man, and comments are superfluous.

Perhaps it may not be known to all that in the Ashrama prayer at dawn one of the daily items is the recitation of the nineteen verses of the Gita beginning from verse 53 of Chap II to the end. And we may not be wrong if we infer that the ideal placed before the Ashrama is that of the man of steady wisdom which the Lord explains to Arjuna. It would be an idle speculation as to the measure of success attained by the Mahatma himself toward this ideal. But one can safely assert without any fear of contradiction that among all the public men of the world few could ever hope to reach the stage which he has attained.

No other great religions of the world is so absolutely impersonal as the Hindu religion. But it is also tragically true that at the present day the followers of this very religion are everywhere found worshipping personalities and ignoring the principles which they all lived and embodied. Hence we find that there are many in this country who would preach the Mahatma as an incarnation of the Divinity, literally worship his feet and shower gold and gems upon him but would not raise their little finger for the principles he would die for. We are not at all

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suggesting that such things are bad in themselves, for it is but natural for man to pay his outward respect where such purity, love and renunciation are manifested, but the matter should not end there. For, after all such great men are nothing but the embodiments of the 'Time Spirit,' and it is by the spread of their principles among the masses is their mission fulfilled. We regard the Mahatma as this Time Spirit, and it is the supreme duty of those who admire him and have faith in him, 'to do their best to live his ideals and principles in their daily life'

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## GOD'S HAND

### III

#### PROTECTING ANGELS

When Von Asselt was sent to Sumatra, in the year 1856, he was the first European missionary to go among the wild Battaks. Twenty years prior two American missionaries had gone there, but they had been killed, and since then no effort had been made to preach among these people.

Von Asselt went alone. He was unable to make himself understood not knowing a single syllable of their language. But from their gestures and hostile looks it was only too evident that he was not welcome in their midst. However, trusting in God he stayed at his post, and before long his wife joined him. The first two years were years of terrible hardships, and it was only through prayer that they had the strength to continue their labour.

When they had lived in the same place for two years, they moved several hours' journey inland, among a tribe somewhat civilised, who received them more kindly. There they built a small house with three rooms, and life became a little more easy and cheerful.

When they had been in this new place for some months, a man came to them from the district where they had been, and whom they had known there. Von Asselt was sitting on a bench in front of his house, and the

visitor sat down beside him. For a while they talked of this, that and the other. Then the man said, 'Now Tuan (teacher), I have a question to ask.'

And what is that? said Von Asselt.

'I would like to know who are your watchmen.

What watchmen do you mean? I have no watchmen.

I mean the men whom you station around your house at night to protect you.'

'But I have no watchmen,' Von Asselt said again.

I have only a little herdboy and a little cook. They would make poor watchmen.

Then the visitor looked at him incredulously, as if he wished to say, 'O, do not try to make me believe that for I have seen them myself.'

After a short silence the man said, 'May I look through your house, to see if they are hid there?'

'Yes, certainly,' Von Asselt said laughing. 'You may look through the house. You will not find anybody.' So he went in and searched everywhere, but, of course, found no one. He seemed very much disappointed and still incredulous.

Then Von Asselt curious to know what it all meant, asked the man to tell him about the watchmen of whom he spoke, and then he told the story.

'When you first came to us,' the visitor said, 'we were very angry at you. We did not want you to live among us, we did not trust you, and believed you had some design against us. Therefore we came together and resolved to kill you and your wife. Accordingly, we went to your house night after night but when we came near, there always stood close around the house a double row of men with glittering weapons. So we did not dare to attack them to get into your house.'

'Not willing to abandon our plan, we went to a professional assassin,\* and asked him if he would undertake

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\* There still was among the savage Battaks at that time a special guild of assassins who killed for hire any one whom it was desired to get out of the way.

to kill you and your wife The assassin laughed at us because of our cowardice and said, I fear no one I will get through those watchmen' So we came all together one evening, and the assassin swinging his weapon over his head went on before us As we neared your house, we remained behind and let him go on alone But in a short time he came running back, and said, 'No, I dare not go through alone Two rows of big, strong men stand there, close together, and their weapons shine like fire Then he gave it up to kill you ' But, now, tell me, Tuan, who are those watchmen? Have you never seen them? "

Then Von Asselt told him that neither he nor his wife had ever seen them, that they did not know even that they were there, that these men were angels sent by God to protect him and his wife, that God had promised in His Word that He would take care of His children, and that He had shown them His angels that they also might believe and worship Him

#### IV

#### THE CLOCK STRUCK THIRTEEN

It was the midnight hour, in the town of Plymouth, many years ago, when two men stood close to the great clock of the town The men were strangers and had not spoken But when the clock struck the midnight hour one of them said, addressing the other, Did you notice that the clock struck thirteen instead of twelve?" "Yes," the other replied, "I noticed it It is strange indeed I wonder how it happened!" The men then bade each other 'Good night," and parted One of these men was a gentleman by the name of Captain Jarvis

It was not very long afterwards that this same Captain Jarvis awoke very early one morning, and feeling a strange restlessness, got up, dressed, and went down to the front door of his house When he opened the door, what was his surprise to find his groom standing

there with his horse saddled and bridled, ready for him to mount

Why did you bring my horse without my order? ' the Captain said. It is yet very early.

I had a strong feeling that you would be wanting your horse Sir," the groom replied. It seemed impossible for me to stay longer in my bed. It was as if some one urged me to get your horse ready and bring it to you.

The Captain was astonished and a little annoyed. But as it was a beautiful morning he mounted the horse and rode off. He had no special object in view, and he let his horse go wherever he chose. Down to the riverside they went, close to the spot where the ferryboat took passengers across. What, then, was the Captain's amazement when he saw the ferryman there, waiting with his boat to ferry him across at that early hour.

'How are you here so early, my man?' he inquired at once.

'I couldn't rest in my bed, Sir,' the ferryman replied, for I had a feeling that I was wanted to ferry some one across."

The Captain and horse both got into the boat, and were conveyed to the other side. Again the horse was given his own way as to where he should go. On and on they went, till at length they came to a large country town.

The Captain noticed some commotion in the town, and asked a passer-by if there was anything of interest going on.

No, Sir," the passer-by replied, "nothing but the trial of a man for murder."

The Captain rode to the place where the trial was going on, dismounted, and entered the building. As he walked in, he heard the judge say, addressing the prisoner, Have you anything to say for yourself? All the evidence is against you."

I have nothing to say, Sir, except that I am an innocent man. I was far away from the place where the crime was committed. But there is only one man in all

the world who could prove it I don't know that man's name, nor where he lives At the time the murder is said to have taken place, we stood together in the town of Plymouth when it was midnight, and we both heard the great town clock strike thirteen, instead of twelve, and remarked it to each other If he were here, he could speak for me, but, unless God intervenes, my case is hopeless, as I cannot get him "

The Captain hearing this was thunder-struck "I am here! I am here!" he shouted "I was the man who stood at midnight beside the great Plymouth clock and heard it strike thirteen, instead of twelve What the prisoner says is absolutely true I identify him as the man On the night of the murder, at the very time it was committed, that man was with me, at Plymouth, and we remarked to each other how remarkable it was that the clock should strike thirteen at the midnight hour "

The condemned man was thus proved innocent, and was at once set free God's hand had saved him

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## SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA

(Continued from p 514)

योऽसौ गुणक्षोभकृतो विकारः प्रधान मूलान्महतः प्रसृतः ॥

अहं त्रिवृन्मोहविकल्पहेतुर्वैकारिकस्तामस ऐन्द्रियश्च ॥ ३२ ॥

32 This modification, due to God<sup>1</sup> who upsets the equilibrium of the Gunas, produced from the Mahat which, again, has for its cause the Prakriti, is known as egoism It is threefold—Vaikarika,<sup>2</sup> Tamasa and Aindriya—and is the cause of doubt characterised by ignorance

[1 God—as the operative cause

<sup>2</sup> *Vaikarika* &c—the same as *Sattvika*, *Tamasa* and *Rajasa*, representing the divisions of *Adhidaiva*, *Adhibhuta* and *Adhyatma* respectively

One must realise the Atman by rooting out Egoism—this is the suggestion of this and the next verse }

आत्मापरिज्ञानमयो विचारो एतन्तीति नास्तीति मित्रार्यनिष्ठः ॥  
व्यर्गोऽपि नैयोपरमेत गुप्ता मत्तः परावृत्तधिया स्वलोकात् ॥३३॥

33 The dispute as to whether the Atman is or is not, hinges on a difference of views merely, and is due to the non perception of the Atman. Even though it is baseless, it never ceases<sup>1</sup> for men who are averse to Me, their own self

[1 Never ceases—and creates an endless round of births and deaths]

उद्धव उवाच ॥

त्यक्त. परावृत्तधिय स्वहने. कर्मभि प्रभो ॥

उशावचान्यथा देहान्गृह्णन्ति विसृजन्ति च ॥ ३४ ॥

तन्ममाख्याहि गोविन्द दुर्विभाव्यमनात्मभि ॥

नष्टेतत्प्रायशो लोके विद्वांस सन्ति वाञ्छिता ॥ ३५ ॥

Uddhava said

34-35 Tell me, O Lord, O Govinda, how<sup>1</sup> men averse to Thee obtain and give up, through their own actions, bodies high and low. It is inscrutable for those who are addicted to the senses. Few are the men who know it in the world,—the majority are deluded

[1 How &c—He asks about transmigration]

श्रीभगवानुवाच ॥

मन कर्ममय नृणामिन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिर्युतम् ॥

लोकाल्लोक प्रयात्यन्य आत्मा तदनुवर्तते ॥ ३६ ॥

The Lord said

36 The mind<sup>1</sup> of man, swayed by past work, goes from one sphere to another, accompanied by the five<sup>2</sup> organs. The Atman, which is distinct from it, follows<sup>3</sup> it

[1 Mind &c—The whole thing says the Lord is due to the subtle body]

<sup>2</sup> Five—implies all the ten

<sup>3</sup> Follows—through identification]



ध्यायन्मनोऽनुविषयान्दृष्टान्वानुश्रुतानथ ॥

उद्यत्सीदत्कर्मतन्त्रं स्मृतिस्तदनुशाम्यति ॥ ३७ ॥

37 The mind swayed by past work, as it dwells on sense-objects experienced or heard of, flashes<sup>1</sup> up with regard to these and sleeps over the past After this memory is lost

[1 *Flashes &c*—It is all a question of memory The new body is remembered and the old forgotten The centre of identification is thus changed ]

विषयामिनिवेशेन नात्मानं यत्स्मरेत्पुनः ॥

जन्तोर्वैकस्यचिद्धं तोमृत्प्युरत्यन्तविस्मृतिः ॥ ३८ ॥

38 Being engrossed in a particular sense-object,<sup>1</sup> man no more recollects himself This utter self-forgetfulness of man, from any cause,<sup>2</sup> is verily his death

[1 *Sense-object*—the new body produced by past work So also in the next verse

2 *Any cause*—either the intense enjoyment of an angelic body or the extreme pain of a low body undergoing tortures ]

जन्म त्वात्मतया पुंसः सर्वभावेन भूरिद ॥

विषयस्वीकृति प्रादुर्यथा स्वप्नमनोरथः ॥ ३९ ॥

39 O generous one, the acceptance<sup>1</sup> by a man of a particular sense-object completely as himself is called his birth—as in the case of dream and imagination

[1 *Acceptance &c*—It is all due to identification ]

स्वप्नं मनोरथं चेत्यं प्राक्तनं न स्मरत्यसौ ॥

तत्र पूर्वमिवात्मानमपूर्वं चानुपश्यति ॥ ४० ॥

40 In a similar way, he no more remembers the old dream<sup>1</sup> and imagination In the new experience he considers his old self as just come into being

[1 *Dream &c*—of the body ]

इन्द्रियायनसृष्टयेदं त्रैविध्यं भाति वस्तुनि ॥

बहिरन्तर्मिदाहेतुर्जनोऽसज्जनकृद्यथा ॥ ४१ ॥

41 As a man creates phantom bodies in a dream, so this threefold division<sup>1</sup> which is the creation of mind appears in the Atman, which becomes<sup>2</sup> the cause of the division of interior and exterior

[1 Division—into Adhidaiva etc

2 Becomes &c—in this instance, through identification The man has subjective and objective experiences, that is ]

नित्यदा ह्यङ्ग भूतानि भवन्ति न भवन्ति च ॥

फालेनालक्ष्यवेगेन सूक्ष्मत्वाच्च न दृश्यते ॥ ४२ ॥

42 My friend, through the imperceptible march of Time creatures are being continually born and dying But this is not observed because of its subtlety

[The Lord refers unasked to this constant molecular change in the body to stimulate a spirit of dispassion ]

(To be continued)

## REPORTS AND APPEALS

### THE THIRD GENERAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FOR THE YEARS 1917-1922

The above report contains a general survey of the activities in which the Mission has been engaged during the aforesaid years The works of the Mission may be classified under three general heads (1) *Missionary work*, including specially preaching and publication of religious literature, (2) *Philanthropic work*, (3) *Educational work*

The missionary work has been done from the Maths and Ashramas where the members by living a life of practical spirituality and holding occasional classes, conversations and lectures directly or indirectly do preaching work There are altogether 17 such institutions in India and 4 outside India Under the second head fall all those activities of the Mission which go to ameliorate the physical sufferings of the people, giving relief in times of famine, flood and other scourges of nature and establishing dispensaries, nursing homes and the like Temporary

relief works on the occasion of providential mishaps are generally organised from the head quarters of the Mission at Belur, and 19 such relief works have been done during the years under review in Bengal, Behar, United Provinces, Assam and Burma. There are altogether 12 permanent philanthropic centres affiliated to the Mission in various parts of India as well as Burma. Under the educational work come all those activities which are concerned with spreading education among the people, and they include the conducting of industrial schools, orphanages, residential schools and boarding houses for boys and girls. The report mentions the names of 10 such affiliated institutions besides those which are likely to be affiliated soon.

The appendix contains the summary of the Provident Fund account year by year, which was published in detail from time to time as occasions demanded. From a cursory glance at the names of those who contributed to the Mission fund, we find that though the Mission has got friends and sympathisers throughout the length and breadth of the country, its activities are mainly confined to a few provinces in India. We know that wherever a centre of the Mission has been started, it has originally grown out of the nucleus formed by the interested local people. So it is hoped that our friends of the unrepresented provinces will show a keener interest in the activity of the Mission by locally organising such works.

#### THE FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON, FOR THE YEAR 1924

Within the short period of four years this institution seems to have grown in great usefulness as is shown by the report of its work under review. In the Indoor Hospital altogether 1,113 patients were treated, whereas in the Outdoor Hospital as many as 48,355 cases were attended to in the year. The total receipts of the year amounted to Rs 25,274-14-3, including the balance of the previous year, and the expenditure came up to Rs 23,291-9-3.

The Sevashrama is, however, labouring under a great disadvantage owing to a great financial burden as indicated by the outstanding loan of Rs 8,500 at the end of the year. In view of the fact that this institution renders help to suffering humanity irrespective of caste, creed or nationality, it deserves the sympathy of all generous people, so that the financial handicap may soon be removed.

#### THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BRANCH CENTRE, DACCA, FOR THE YEAR 1924

This centre is engaged in useful works of various kinds. In the year under review it conducted as many as 332 religious classes in different parts of the town and in the Mission house. In the Free School started and maintained by it boys of the locality get free elementary education, and there were altogether 89 boys in the roll at the end of the year. It has got a small Charitable Dispensary, in the outdoor department of which 3,379 cases were attended to, and the indoor department treated 20 patients.

This Mission centre also extended its activities outside the area of the town and sent relief parties to work in villages during epidemics in the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh and Sylhet. We wish the institution all success.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, BALIATI, DACCA

This Ashrama was started in 1910 and has since been conducting a Free Primary School for boys, another for girls and a Tol for Sanskrit study. It has also a Charitable Dispensary attached to it and undertook some temporary relief works. We thank the organisers of this Ashrama for the silent work of help and service they are doing.

#### THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA, FOR 1924

This Society was started by some enthusiastic members of the Calcutta public in 1923 with Srimat Swami

Abhedananda as its President to organise various works of public utility During the year, as many as 150 religious classes were held, and in the industrial department, teaching various vocational arts, there were altogether 20 boys on the roll The Society has extended its activities by starting branch centres at Darjeeling and Hajigunj (Comilla) At the latter place an M E School is being maintained with 80 boys on the roll The Society has proved useful in various other ways

#### THE MATRI MANDIR, JAYRAMBATI, BANKURA

Jayrambati is an out of the way village in the district of Bankura, sanctified by the birth of the Holy Mother The locality is generally infested with malaria, and the people are extremely backward in education So the above Ashrama has been conducting a Chantable Dispensary, a Vidyapith teaching up to the Upper Primary Standard and a Night School for the benefit of the local people But as the unostentatious works in a remote village fail to draw the attention of the wider public, the Ashrama has been struggling for funds to widen the scope of its activities which are so needful Any contribution in the shape of money, medicine etc will be thankfully received by Srimat Swami Saradananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta

Besides, we are glad to receive the Reports of the following philanthropic institutions which also are doing much useful work in various ways

- (1) The Ramakrishna Seva-Samity, Sylhet
  - (2) The Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Chittagong
  - (3) The Ramakrishna Seva-Samity, Kalma, Dacca
  - (4) The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Narayanguj, Dacca
  - (5) The Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre, Sonargaon, Dacca
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## NEWS AND NOTES

### ON SIR J C BOSE'S RESEARCHES

The latest developments in the researches in plant-physiology which Sir J C Bose has been carrying on for the last quarter of a century in his laboratories, almost uncontestedly establish the truth of the uniformity of life between animals and plants. What exactly is meant by uniformity of life? Life in common parlance is very loosely used for the Self (Atman) as well as for those finer actions and reactions or sensibilities which we find closely associated with the ego. In Indian philosophy and religion a fundamental difference is recognised between these aspects. Thus take the feelings of sorrow and gladness, sleep and wakefulness, pain and suffering. All these (as distinguished from, say, blood circulation or digestion) we generally consider to be signs of the existence of Life or Self. Philosophically and strictly speaking, they are nothing of the kind. They do not prove the existence of the Self. That which you can handle with and know through material instruments can only be material. Those feelings or sensibilities only appear as endowed with consciousness, or as manifestations of it, being in fact mere actions and reactions of matter in its subtler form. As the Gita tersely puts it. All actions are wrought by the qualities of Nature only. The self, deluded by egoism thinketh, I am the doer. Thus the uniformity of life which the great scientist proves is not the uniform existence of the Atman or Self-consciousness in plants and animals, but only the identity and uniformity of their subtler actions and reactions which, like any other material phenomena, are capable of being handled and demonstrated in a laboratory. And inferentially he proves the truth of the Vedantic conception of *neti neti Atma*, i.e., this Atman is neither the senses, nor the desires, the mind, the ego or the Buddha, but is beyond whatever is predicated of It.

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However, till Sir Jagadish made his discoveries known, even this uniformity of animals and plants was not recognised. They were supposed to represent two streams of life having nothing in common, the one restless and responsive with reflex movements and pulsating organs, and the other seemingly passive and irresponsive. The plant, it was considered, has no muscular tissue or nerve. But the results obtained in his laboratory prove that the plant is not a mere mass of vegetative growth, but that its every part is instinct with sensibility. We are able to record (with instruments constructed by Indian craftsmen under Sir J. C. Bose's direction, which are marvels of human ingenuity and accurate precision) the throbbings of its pulsating life, and find them wax and wane according to the life conditions of the plant and cease with its death. We find the different parts of the plant linked together by nervous threads, so that the tremor of excitation initiated at one place courses through the whole. In these and many other ways, the life-actions of the plant and man are alike. Thus is proved again through the cold mechanism of science what became patent to the intuitive vision of India's seers thousands of years ago, that all life is one and is governed by identical laws.

This synthetic vision is India's peculiar gift to the fund of world's knowledge. In all departments of her life and activity, this has been her one unceasing effort,—the discovery of the underlying unity of apparently conflicting and unrelated phenomena. And so it is not mere coincidence that her greatest scientist to-day is striving after the same synthetic realisation in the realms of the Western science and has achieved such a conspicuous success. This success has been due not a little to his following India's ancient method of knowledge, which is concentration and self-control. This has been declared to be the direct pathway to the heart of things. Before the concentrated gaze of a purified mind, things reveal their inner secrets. Hence it is that not only the philosophers and religious teachers, but also the teachers of such secular

knowledge as astronomy or medicine, are looked upon as Rishis or seers. A Hindu boy enters the student life with initiation into the process of concentration and meditation. What a contrast to the Western method of education, which is primarily based on observation and experience! Not that the latter method is futile. They are rather complementary. As Sir J. C. Bose himself observes in course of his recent address at Darjeeling:

What is the specific gift which India offers for the advancement of knowledge? It is first in the training of mind by habits of concentration after years of discipline, the mind then apprehends truth almost instinctively. The second is the gift of great imagination held in check by wisdom. Our mind is the true laboratory where every step of the experiment has first to be visualised and afterwards verified by instruments of surpassing sensitiveness and accuracy. In order to discover the invisible mechanism in the interior of the tree, one has to become the tree and feel the pulsation of its beating heart. It is then necessary to get access to the smallest unit of life, the 'life atom,' and record its throbbing pulsations. When microscopic vision fails, we have still to follow the invisible. Every layer in the hidden interior of the tree has to be explored by means of the Electric Probe invented for the purpose. It is then only that we realise the ineffable wonder that has hitherto been hidden from us. For the little we can see is nothing compared with the vastness of that which we cannot. Out of the very imperfection of our senses we have to build a raft of thought to make daring adventures on the great seas of the unknown. I am glad that the importance of the Indian method is being appreciated in the West. The Times, in a leading article, speaks of the work pursued in my Institute as the fertile union of the introspective method of the East with the experimental method of the Western science. It proceeds to say in regard to the work carried out by the speaker that whilst we in Europe were still steeped in imperialism, the subtle Eastern had swept the whole universe into a synthesis and had seen the one in all its changing manifestations. The


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greatest contribution to knowledge would be made when the East and the West can unite their genius for common benefit of humanity "

This happy union, we are glad to note, has been already realised considerably in the Institute which Sir J C Bose founded some years ago, and we unite ourselves with him in his fervent prayer for the fulfilment of its glorious future "In founding my Institute seven years ago, I hoped to be able to revive the great traditions of my country, which so far back as twenty-five centuries ago, welcomed all scholars from different parts of the world, within the precincts of its ancient seats of learning at Nalanda and at Taxilla That dream is coming true, for applications have been received from Professors and Post-graduate Scholars from the West, for being enrolled in my Institute to receive special training in the new methods initiated in India for the advancement of world's knowledge I may still live to see the fulfilment of my dream, the foundation of a true International University "

May his dream come true !

#### ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE

Men who have climbed mountains and have seen huge precipices, alone can guess what a slip of the foot would mean from such stupendous heights And one could better imagine than describe what the fate would be of a fully intoxicated man venturing to tread those narrow paths over the staggering heights

Intoxicated with the false ideas of nationalism and patriotism, Europe has been marching through the course of centuries with banners afloat in the name of culture and civilisation With the power of her dollar and machine, she has been conquering peoples and exterminating races throughout the world This mad rush after materialism and commercialism reacted on her own self, and the result of this organised brute force was seen in the great European tragedy of 1914-1919 Still she has not, it would seem, learnt her lesson Still, her race-pride

and race hatred, the basis of all her nationalism and patriotism, seem not dead. And this state of things threatens the civilisation which she has been building up during the past centuries. This civilisation is essentially materialistic. The science it developed always marched with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other.

With the growing idea of a narrow nationalism, suspicion and jealousy have grown among the peoples of Europe, and instead of creating one humanity and one Christian brotherhood, it has tended to make the gulf between man and man wider and wider. And science has helped the politician in his suicidal ambitions. The Western nations have not yet realised that war cannot end war. In spite of the terrible sufferings undergone they have not yet realised with Lord Haldane that an army organised for keeping peace cannot keep peace. They have not realised that until they stop their mad rush after this self and power there cannot be peace. 'He who raises the sword shall perish by the sword.' It would look as if this is coming to pass in the near future.

An interesting article on 'The Future of Warfare Western and Eastern possibilities,' in the New Orient by Lieut. Commander Kenworthy M.P., gives us some idea of the preparations that are going on behind the League of Nations, the Courts of Arbitrations and Treaties of Mutual Assistance. Britain is busy in her naval dockyards, building her Nelson and Rodney, the new battle-ships which are to cost her about ten to twelve crores of rupees each. France, Italy, Germany, Japan and America are not behind Great Britain in building cruisers. Lieut. Kenworthy points out that most deadly weapons are being made in the laboratories of chemists and physicists, and the next war in its destructiveness would absolutely dwarf the last great war. These are the days of the wireless, and the aeroplane would be able to cause devastation and havoc by the use of various kinds of bombs laden with fatal gas and disease germs being operated by the wireless. The result would be that the peace-loving population will be assailed.

In the days of the Mahabharata, for that matter, even in later historical times, the Indian warfare never allowed the tiller of the soil, or the woman or the child to be murdered in the name of war. The Kshatriya Dharma requires men to fight only with their equals. Even Ravana, the story goes, in his fight with Sri Ramachandra stopped fighting once when Sri Ramachandra was uncharioted and even offered a chariot to his opponent before starting the fight again. But what could such moral codes have for a civilisation which holds, "All is fair in love and war"?

If the terrible possibilities pointed out by the writer are to become real, even in a partial measure, who can deny that the Western civilisation is on the brink of a precipice?

### THE PROBLEM OF ALL PROBLEMS

A great problem which is seriously facing all who have got the good of the country at heart, is the slow and gradual deterioration of the health of our student community. The Welfare Committee formed by the Calcutta University, on examining about a thousand students of Bengal, found that 60 p.c. of them had defective health. The case is no better in other provinces. The sunken eyes and weak, emaciated figures are the general characteristics of the majority of students. It is but natural, with such a poor resource of health, our young men will find themselves totally handicapped in the struggle of life—not to speak of their helplessness in the desire of fulfilling any higher ambition. When they go out into the world, they invariably seek some easy life of routine work, where no initiative is necessary and where they will not have to face much adverse circumstances. All their higher ambitions and idealism are frozen by the first touch of the cold reality of the world and they count the days only to see the end of their miserable life, as they deem it. This state of things speaks but poorly of the future of our nation, and those who want to build a national fabric,

without remedying these defects, may as well hope to build a castle on quicksands

The cause of this is not only the poor economic condition of our middle class people, as some are apt to suppose, but many other causes have combined to worsen the situation. The University examination, where a few hours' work determines the result of the whole year's labour and which to a great extent influences the future career of their life, costs the health and life of many of our students. From all quarters, our young men get a strong urge to cultivate their intellect, but no encouragement to develop their manliness. This makes them greatly timid and powerless so much so that in their after-life they find it impossible even to protect their hearth and home in the hour of sore need. Then many of our students do not know the ordinary laws of hygiene, and a large number carelessly break them led by a kind of false philosophy that the body needs not much care. However dark may be the situation and however gloomy the future, we cannot deny that much of the responsibility lies with ourselves and the situation can be greatly improved, if we put our best foot foremost. There are some factors over which we have no control, and until they are remedied, the students and their guardians should try to do what can be done in the matter. What is needed most is to create a strong public opinion so that all concerned may be more particular about the health of our students.

The Calcutta University is to be congratulated on its having taken up the problem in right earnest. For some time past it has been examining the health of the students to find out a solution, and recently the Senate by a resolution has made physical exercise binding upon the students. But mere compulsion in this matter will not help much, for, when the students take to physical exercise as a matter of compulsion and not from a strong desire within to improve their health, much of the effect is sure to be lost.

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### UNDER WHICH FLAG?

Any one who reads through the legal columns of a daily newspaper can find that cases of moral delinquency are increasing in the world. Even in India cases of kidnapping and abduction, assault and rape, enticement and seduction are becoming more common than before. We are tempted to ask whether we are really advancing in civilisation or going back to a stage worse than savagery. For, as Havelock Ellis observes, some of the savages of African are more chaste than the Europeans.

The large number of divorce suits, sensationalisms and matters of the like kind that the English dailies are forced to provide to satisfy their readers and the mass evidence produced before the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, ought to be an eye-opener for those who run after everything of the West. We shall not be far wrong in characterising this state of things as the inevitable consequences of a purely materialistic outlook on life. Nevertheless, reformers are not wanting in India who wish that our society should be modelled according to the European pattern.

We by no means depreciate the entire civilisation of the West. We believe that a happy union between the East and West is quite possible and desirable as well. Each will have to be enriched by a policy of give and take. A purely ascetic ideal is not for the ordinary run of humanity, and in this world of activity a bit of worldliness is necessary. Some seem to think that the Indian outlook on life, at least in ancient times, was other-worldly, and this outlook is responsible for the present degeneration of India. This view shows a lack of historical knowledge. India's fall is rather to be attributed to her deviation from the true ideals of her own. Her miserable position is due to the fact that she refused to share with others what was valuable in her own. She buried herself in isolation with a contempt for the Mlechchas, instead of sowing broadcast the truths of Vedanta, she kept it under lock and key and thus brought ruin on herself.

The present contact of India with the West has, however, brought her into the vortex of the world's struggles and interests. She has been roused from her age-long slumber. As one just got out of bed she does not see the way before her clearly. Divided counsels and want of resolution are the two dangers threatening her progress and advancement. She has a great mission to fulfil namely, to prove to the world that permanent peace and happiness is possible only upon a recognition of the supremacy of the spiritual interests of humanity.

She has naturally a double duty to perform. She has to bring out the treasure of the Vedanta philosophy and scatter them broadcast amongst all the sons of India irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Also she has to send out the best representatives of her spiritual culture to the West and help them avert the menace of Mammon worship which is threatening her with extinction.

#### SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The *Tithi* of Swami Vivekananda's sixty-fourth nativity falls on 6th January, 1926. We hope all public and private bodies celebrating this birthday will kindly send us their reports at an early date.

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# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## AWAKENED INDIA



सत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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# Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत आगत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa I iii 4*

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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## TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES

*14th January, 1921 (continued)*

The Swami said that when he had once declared to Sri Ramakrishna his life's ideal to be Nirvâna, he was reproved for entertaining such a low ideal. Sri Ramakrishna said "The ordinary man yearns for Nirvâna. Have you not seen in a game of dice how cautiously the neophyte moves his pieces, keeping them in pairs to escape being checkmated, and how anxious he is to reach the centre? But the expert takes no caution. He deliberately turns down his pieces even when the goal was almost reached, that the play might prolong. And the dice become so attuned in his hands that he can cast them in any pattern he likes. Yes, the 'expert' remains in the world and yet enjoys its fun." The Swami was extremely astonished at the statement, and on his expressing a doubt, he was reassured that it was quite possible through the grace of the Mother. "She graciously makes the dice so attuned," Sri Ramakrishna said metaphorically.

N— reminded the Swami how he had once said that the joy of one day's company with the Incarnate God was enough compensation for the sufferings of a whole life.

The Swami replied 'Yes, it is true. An hour of congregational ringing in the company of the Master used to fill us with such an exceeding joy that we would feel transported, as it were, into an ethereal region. But even meditation now fails to evoke that celestial bliss, or even a semblance of it. That bliss would abide in us for a week continually. We used to feel intoxicated though we did not know the why or how of it. Who will believe it? It is difficult to convince any one. Yet I must speak it out.

The ordinary man seeks Nirvâṇa because he has suffered. But he forgets to remember the tremendous joy there is in Divine communion.

'One day I arrived at the Dakshineswar Temple when he was taking his dinner. A number of cups containing various preparations were arranged before him. Some one perchance thought these an unbecoming luxury, fit only for a *rajasic* life. Śrī Rāmānjan̄a at once said: 'Well, the tendency of my mind is ever towards the Infinite. It is by such *rajasic* devices that I hold it down to the lower planes, or I could not talk with you.

How strange!' I said to myself on hearing him, 'others seek to attain *sattwa* by overcoming *rajas* through rigorous discipline of food, whereas he has to forcibly check his mind from going to the *sattwic* plane!'

'Out of infinite mercy, he once vouchsafed me the realisation that his every action and movement, nay even his footfall was meant for the good of others.

"They have only a superficial understanding of the meaning of selfless action, not a clear grasp. For, if they are once convinced how can they resist practising it? Only the self-deluded glibly talk of having understood it. Complete surrender to Truth is an indispensable condition of selfless action.

It is desires that obstruct spiritual realisation. Could we but surrender ourselves wholly to Him! But no, we

only half rely on Him, lest He should not do the whole thing, and half rely on our own effort "

The Swami then said to R— Tell us something about God "

R — 'We can recite only from the Bhâgavatam of the *Kali Yuga*' (He meant newspaper)

The Swami "Why do you think like that? It is real Bhâgavatam How can there be any *Kali Yuga* for a devotee? (To others) R— sometimes says very nice things The other day he told me a dream of his It seemed almost real and deeply impressed me "

R— was persuaded to recount it "I dreamt," he said, that Sri Ramakrishna was very ill, and had hinted that the dissolution of his body was imminent The disciples were very much cast down, and the Holy Mother was crying in an inner apartment I had an idea in those days when I had this dream that the Divine Incarnate and man differed only in the degree of power And as I stood before Sri Ramakrishna I thought within myself whether the love of his disciples could not induce him to preserve his body a little longer No sooner had the thought crossed my mind than he said 'Look here, there is a great difference between God and men Do you know what men are like? Like persons walking a short distance into the waters of a sea, reaching utmost to the breakers with extreme difficulty and then coming back ' And as he said this, I actually saw an infinite sea spread before me, with men moving in the water, most of whom were very close to the sands, and only one or two gone as far as the last breaker Sri Ramakrishna continued

But God can cross it and return in a moment ' And at once I saw him cross the sea and come back! He then said to me 'The mind of the Avatara always tends towards the Infinite Only a particle of his mind attends to the universe of which the devotees form a very minute portion indeed How can they hold down my mind?'

"The Holy Mother also said the same thing She said 'My mind always wants to soar into the Infinite I have forcibly kept it in a lower plane by various devices

They talk of my attachments! They do not know that I can this moment sever all ties!'

The Swami 'I heard a beautiful story relating to her, told by herself. After the passing of Sri Ramakrishna, she was once crying, when he appeared before her and said 'How is it? Do you think I am gone? Here I am! I have as it were, passed from one room to another, that's all. You may not see me physically but you know in many ways that I exist!'

And so the talk ended for the day. But before he rose up, the Swami said to R— 'See how I have made you talk of God!'

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE HINDU-MOSLEM PROBLEM

A characteristic of the Indo-Aryan genius is its infinite capacity for assimilation. That indeed is the predominant note of Indian history. Of all races and civilisations, it may be said of the Hindu civilisation alone that it never antagonised or exterminated any cultures in whatever stages of evolution. Even the most crude of them were allowed a legitimate scope and congenial atmosphere to grow into their destined fulfilments and ideals. In this way does the phoenix-like Hindu civilisation survive every invasion of foreign races or cultures. It looks so passive! For a time it seems to go down before the onslaughts of the aggressor. A few centuries pass, and the aggressor has vanished,—not killed or driven out, but assimilated and absorbed within the Mother Church. This is the eternal way of Hinduism, the Eternal Religion and Culture. She conquers and fulfils by love. This is her panacea for all ills of national life.

If, therefore, India is again faced by similar problems of the conflict of races, religions or cultures, the wisest and the easiest course will be to apply the eternal Hindu method to their solution. To seek for other means is

to deny India's history and court failure. The problem of the Moslems need not be made an exception.

There are some who say that Swami Vivekananda was only a *Hindu* religious reformer. He cannot be accepted as a full-fledged *national* leader, inasmuch as he had not left behind any formulated scheme for unifying the Hindus and the Mussalmans, the two premier communities of India. It follows, therefore, that whenever Swami spoke of India, he only made a lax use of the word and meant only the Hindus. We, however, do not feel inclined to charge Swami Vivekananda with such a slack use of language. Nor do we understand how any one who has perused his life-story and his seven volumes of works can so glibly speak of him as a sectarian leader. We could prove to the hilt that all our present talks and sentiments of nationalism have been possible mainly through the grace of this man, and that if any one has taught us to feel proud of our national heritage, it is Swami Vivekananda. But that is not our present theme. We shall only say that he spoke of India and thought of India in a most comprehensive sense, and in the Future India which was his eternal dream, Islam has as good a place as Hinduism. "Islamic body and Vedantic heart,"—that was his condensed description of that blessed consummation.

He was never indifferent to Islam. There are innumerable instances which prove his great admiration for, and wide-awake consciousness of the importance of, Islam. He never tired of narrating the glories of the Muhammedan rule in India. There was a time before he went to America, when he pursued the study of Islamic culture and religion for a number of days with his brother-disciples with a great love and appreciation, and so deep was the impression left in their minds of its greatness and beauty, that whenever they would meet any Muhammedan at that time, they would salute him as a symbol of Islam. It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Readers of his life and works will find ample proof of his



complete understanding of the true relation of Islam to Indian nationalism

Yet it is true that he has not left any detailed scheme as to how these two communities are to be combined into a united nation. What is the meaning of this paradox? Those who have studied him and his works thoroughly and carefully will have no difficulty in explaining it. The explanation is that he thought that the required unity can and will come mainly through the Hindus through their eternal method of assimilation. He found no use in haranguing to the Mussalmans or in writing long articles on the terms of settlement with them. He did what was just necessary. He set the machinery of assimilation working and the effect will follow automatically. Assimilation—that is the solution he has given to the Hindu-Moslem problem. And when he declared that his one aim of life was to make Hinduism aggressive, he indicated the *modus operandi* of that assimilation. And if he has succeeded in making Hinduism aggressive, as we are sure he has, certainly then he has done much better than merely formulating plans of the Hindu-Moslem union. He has not talked, he has acted.

How is that assimilation to happen? How to make Hinduism aggressive? Assimilation comes about by a re-definition of Hinduism. At the time of Buddha, Hinduism had been faced with similar race problems. Buddha so defined the Aryan religion that innumerable votaries found admission into the Mother Church, and to-day they occupy some of the high social positions. What did Buddha do? He did not preach any new religion, nor did he antagonise true Hinduism. What keeps men apart are never the essentials of religion or culture. It is the accretions and the corruptions upheld by traditions or interested priesthood, that stand between Buddha simply stood against them and emphasised the essentials. The result was that the best elements in society declared themselves in his favour. This made the Mother Church aggressive—of course spiritually, and open her portals to all who would owe allegiance to her.

universal ideal. Similarly, Sankara who found the Eternal Religion in a disintegrated condition, divided into a thousand sections and full of corrupt practices, made her self-conscious by formulating and declaring the essentials. This not only gave her an organised form, but endowed her with a new vigour and purpose, and made her a potent agent for assimilation of new elements. That process of assimilation is still going on. And the activities of Râmânûja, Chaitanya, Nânak, Kavir, Râmânanda, Dâdu and a host of other religious reformers form but links in that continuous chain of assimilation.

We have to quicken and hasten that process in the present times. What is the primary condition of that quickening? A new definition of Hinduism. We have to so conceive our religion and its ideals that there may not remain in our outlook or behaviour anything indicative of any remarkable difference from Islam, Christianity or any other religion. By bringing about a transformation in our own religious outlook that thereby it may become a harmony and synthesis of all religious ideals, shall we attain our end. As in the preceding ages, in the present also, such a transformation is possible only by emphasising the essentials. The first requirement is that we should organise Hinduism as a unitary body. Swami Vivekânanda pointed out repeatedly in course of his lectures in India that in essentials all the different sects of Hinduism agree, that it is the undue insistence on non-essentials that create bad blood among them. So away with the thousand and one details of ritualism. Let us once again stand united on the essentials of spiritual life. Let us live them in their pure form. This will mean a great change not only in our spiritual outlook, but also in matters social. The "don't-touchism" which, in its manifest as well as unmanifest form, is the bane of our religion and society, will then disappear for ever. Simultaneously with that, Hinduism will feel herself as a unitary body having a mission to fulfil. She will become as deep as the sea and as broad as the sky, and as strong and invincible as Indra's thunder. Then only will she be

prepared for, and indeed will have half achieved the assimilation of other conflicting races and cultures

Let us remember that though the Muhammedans are numerically and otherwise the most important minor community in India, yet from the standpoint of Hinduism they form but a part of her problem. Her object is to assimilate all races and cultures that inhabit India. This is her divinely-appointed function in history. What applies to the Muhammedans applies equally to other communities. It is foolish to think, however, that in such an assimilation there is any thought of domination. Both parties must undergo change before they can meet in harmony. Hinduism has to change, so also Islam and Christianity. The change is not to be forced into them by extraneous domination. It is the changing conditions of the world that necessitate this change. We must change in the required direction, or we shall perish. For example, Muhammedanism must become more philosophical and catholic in her views. The world can no more tolerate fanaticism. Islam must recognise her spiritual affinity and identity with other religions. So also Christianity. So also Hinduism. When these changes have taken place, a new light will dawn on our vision, and religion which being divided into warring creeds, is to-day the source of interminable differences, will become the very foundation of the united humanity. In fact this is the age of the Universal Religion. Time-spirit demands it, and we can but obey. If we do not adjust ourselves by forethought, bitter experience will bring this lesson home to us. Sri Râmkrishna used to say that it is the names that create all the difference between religion and religion. Could we but forget those differentiating names, we would discover a wonderful unity among all the recognised religions of the world. How true! What is wanted of us is that we in effect forget these names.

This, indeed is the consummation which Hinduism aims at by assimilation. It is pertinent to ask why we speak of Hinduism absorbing other religions or cultures. Of course, we do not mean that Hinduism, as it stands

to-day with its defects and corruptions, having a distinct individual tinge demarcating her from other cultures and creeds, will and can ever fulfil that purpose. Hinduism, to be fit to assimilate other cultures, must become impersonal and cured of her present shortcomings. That, is what we mean by the organisation of essentials. There is, therefore, no question of domination. Yet there is truth in our saying that Hinduism will assimilate other cultures. The reason is obvious. Of all religions and cultures, it has been given to Hinduism alone to become synthetic and all-inclusive. It is an accident of history. No other religion or culture possesses the secret of that divine alchemy. If India is ever to become a nation, all the different communities shall have to unite. That can be only on the basis of religion. If it is not to be a mere make-believe, we must evolve a spiritual formula which shall be acceptable to all the communities. And who is better fitted than Hinduism to do it? Then again, the desired spiritual harmony can be organised only round a certain spiritual nucleus. And who again is better fitted than Hinduism to provide it? Therefore the model after which the future India shall grow, will be the gift of Hinduism. All other communities have to adjust themselves to it. Fortunately, however, that synthesis is one which is purely impersonal, the basis of every culture and creed, and it is spacious enough to include all types within it, without any way interfering with their essentials or characteristics, and allowing infinite scope and freedom for their individual development. This synthesis has been the special gift of Hinduism to the world in different ages, and shall be again in the present.

We request earnestly all Hindus to deeply ponder over this fact and be convinced of the purpose for which Hinduism has outlived innumerable historical crises.

The organisation of Hinduism on the basis of essentials, on impersonal and synthetic principles, is the primary need of the hour. To make her aggressive in the spiritual sense so that all fanaticism and religious quarrels may vanish from the earth, is the ultimate aim.

There may be doubts as to whether the views expressed by us are really those of Swamiji. But writes Sister Nivedita in her *The Master as I saw Him* 'His object as regarded India, said the Swami in a private conversation, had always been to 'make Hinduism aggressive. The Eternal Faith must become active and proselytising, capable of sending out special missions, of making converts, of taking back into her fold those of her own children who had been perverted from her, and of the conscious and deliberate assimilation of new elements. Did he know that any community becomes aggressive, that any faith will be made active, the moment it becomes aware of itself as an organised unity? Did he know that he himself was to make this self-recognition possible to the Church of his forefathers? At any rate, his whole work, from the first, had consisted, according to his own statement, of 'a search for the common bases of Hinduism. He felt instinctively that to find these and reassert them, was the one way of opening to the Mother Church the joyous conviction of her own youth and strength. Had not Buddha preached renunciation and Nirvâna and because these were the essentials of the national life, had not India, within two centuries of his death, become a powerful empire? So he, too, would fall back upon the essentials and declare them, leaving results to take care of themselves.' Here again are the words of Swamiji himself. "Hinduism is the very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course, we could strike a blow now and then, in defence of our homes! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Every one had to learn that. So let these races of newcomers whirl on! They will all be taken into Hinduism in the end! Swamiji thought that if the impersonal ideals of Hinduism were capacious enough to accommodate any religious and cultural ideals, the constitution of the caste system was equally elastic to assimilate new social units. Each new factor can well become (as it has been many times in

the past) a new caste, its respectability depending on its intrinsic merits or previous position

The Moslem problem as it faces us to-day is more superficial than real. The Indian Muhammedan differs greatly from his brother in other countries in outlook and behaviour. Has not the genius of Hinduism already exerted a strong influence on the Indian Muhammedans? Further, are not the majority of them converts from Hinduism? If they still remain a hostile body, it is because the Muhammedan invasions of India occurred at a time when the Hindu society was just emerging out of the social and spiritual chaos that the declining days of Buddhism had brought about. And the only thing it could do was to raise barriers of defensive customs and conventions against the culturally inferior aggressors. The need of self-defence over, and the reorganisation of society fairly advanced, Hinduism found time to set its assimilating genius at work, and the result was a host of religious reformers who preached a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. Political disruption afterwards interrupted this work of reform. We have to take up the work again. But it is good to remember that most of our differences with the Muhammedans are caused by our weakness which invites oppression and aggression, and encourages them to become inconsiderate and thoughtless. No one likes to learn from cowards. Had we strength enough, three-fourths of our troubles would never have been at all, and the remaining one-fourth would have disappeared at a slight effort. They also are eager to learn lessons. The Turks are learning from the West. So also the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Afghans. But have not we the Hindus a better way to show? It rests on us to demonstrate our ability not only to make ourselves strong enough to resist all kinds of aggression, but also to make others listen to us with respect. Therefore strength is what we require. And strength can come only by making the common bases of Hinduism conscious, dynamic and aggressive. In this way has Swami Vivekânanda solved the Hindu-Moslem problem, by rousing up the sleeping

energy of the Eternal Religion and setting her working along her ancient path of assimilation

It is good to be clear in thoughts. Let all Hindus be conscious of the central purpose of their culture, fulfil and realise it in their life and help it in its onward progress. Yet this is our destiny—the Aryanisation of the whole human race. It is not mere chance that all races, cultures and religions have come together in India. For here alone the unification and synthesis of them, on which the future of humanity depends, can be accomplished through the genius of Hinduism. Let us set ourselves to our task. Let us first unite ourselves on the eternal and essential principles of religion, not merely believing in them, but living and practising them. This way will come strength, and assimilation will go on automatically. There is no other way, no other way.

We invite the attention of the Hindu Mahāsabhā to our observations. It had begun beautifully, but we are afraid, its present political inclinations will hamper its true progress. Let it address itself to the liberalisation of the concept of Hinduism. It can at best do intellectual work, a great work in itself. If it succeeds in creating an atmosphere in which the realisation of Hinduism as the Universal Religion becomes possible, it will have done half the work required for the building up of the Indian nation. Harmonisation of the different creeds of Hinduism as well as of other religions is the most urgent task before it. This way it can render the best services possible to Hinduism as well as to the nation. Social reform will follow automatically, and regenerated strength will bring the thoughtless section of the Muhammedans to their senses. But the political bias will only serve to deflect its progress from the true direction and make it the mouthpiece of a political faction.

Thus has Swami Vivekānanda solved the communal problems of India. The great ones do not always speak the word of mouth. We whose vision does not penetrate deeper than the skin and can only guess the mind, do not know other ways of communication than the spoken

word That is why we want clear declarations But to the Messengers of Light, the world of spirit alone is real It is there they make their communications So has Swamiji delivered his message to the heart of the nation Who that have eyes to see, can ever doubt that a tremendous change is going on in Hinduism and working in the right direction? He has not spoken, but he has done it And it will not be long before Hinduism will reassert herself and fulfil her God-appointed mission

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## AN APOSTLE OF STRENGTH

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was essentially a man for youths He appealed always to the eternal youth that exists in all men—youth characterised by hope and enthusiasm, that lurks even in old age, and defying death lives, as it were, in our ashes For even at overwhelming failures, when the darkening clouds of despair and disappointment surround us, when all the forces of the universe seem to be conspiring against us and we ourselves become doubtful of our capacity, even then does there not exist within us another side of our nature still unexplored and undiscovered—wherein we find the lingering hope and the hidden ray of light which inspire us with the belief that success in life may not be altogether impossible for us if only some obstacles can be removed which have stood as stumbling blocks against all progress? Even the worst fool at times thinks that but for some reasons he could surely cope with the best of men on earth, even the arrant coward is not ready to confess to himself that he has not the capacity to stand shoulder to shoulder with the most triumphant general and the bravest of soldiers, even the greatest criminal does not in the inmost closet of his heart think that he has not in him the making of a saint This dormant fire in mankind Swamiji would instantaneously arouse



to blazing flames wherever he went. During the early years of his life, when he was seized with an intense desire to realise God and was passing through the stormy days of struggle, whoever came in contact with him, would be invariably caught in the whirlwind of ideas and aspirations which were all his own. And in after life wherever he would come in with personal contact he would take up the divine fire in him. His magnetic touch would fill even those who were advanced in age with a strength and enthusiasm rare even in the young. Swamiji was truly termed as strength personified—nay, he was more than that. He could kindle strength in others dispelling all minions of darkness—doubts and despair, fears and misgivings. To see him was to be filled with new ideals and aspirations, to live with him was to have the courage and strength to realise those dreams in life.

He could never tolerate that any man would lose faith in himself. For, nobody can do so, if he but sounds the depths of potentiality that is stored in him. Is not every man Divine? Is not every one a child of Immortality? And as such are we not from every point of the earth equally near to God and Heaven? To lose faith in oneself is to lose faith in God and this could hardly be brooked by one who had found out the God in himself. According to Swamiji no man could go down so low, that he would not by an upward curve rise to a position of the highest of men. But very often man has to do that from a sheer desperation, impelled by the torment of heart-breaking agony, and emboldened simply by the tyranny of circumstances. But every man can achieve the same goal without that painful cost if he only believes in his potential Divinity.

It was from the standpoint that man is Divine and has got infinite possibilities latent in him, that Swamiji looked at many problems that awaited solution at his hands. When we recognise the divine heritage of every man, all strife and quarrel, hatred and malice cease and we attain to 'sameness' which is the goal of religion.

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But generally man forgets that his neighbour is only his own self clothed in another form, and out of that ensues disunion and disruption that have disturbed the peace of the world from time immemorial. But what a great tragedy it is if we think only a bit deeper! So Swamiji cried in anguish 'This world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressor.' Two forces are at work throughout the whole world—the force of attraction and the force of repulsion. As a result of the conflict of these has come out the world, and this has made possible the growth of human society. There will be always differentiation, for absolute sameness is death. Relatively no two men are alike. Men will be always different in forms, parts and temperaments. And the stronger, more intelligent and powerful man will always have better success in life. It is foolish and idle to expect to stop that. But what is deplorable is that the stronger will try to live at the expense of the weaker and stand in the way of the latter's progress. "The work of ethics has been and will be in the future," says the Swami, "not the destruction of variation, and the establishment of sameness in the external world, which is impossible, for it would bring death and annihilation,—but to recognise the unity in spite of all these variations, to recognise the God within, in spite of everything that frightens us, to recognise that infinite strength as the property of everyone, in spite of all apparent weakness and to recognise the eternal, infinite, essential purity of the soul in spite of everything to the contrary that appears on the surface." If we recognise this in social life, all strife between man and man ceases, and if national work is based on this principle, the world will not have to see from time to time the hideous displays of brutality by warring nations. Swamiji viewed with alarm the absence of this saving principle amongst the Western nations, infuriated by the lust of wealth and intoxicated by the greed of power, and he exclaimed that the whole of the Western civilisation rested on a

volcano which might burst at any moment and destroy the whole world. The last war has proved the truth of his prophecy.

A nation in order to live on earth must contribute its quota to the world civilisation. No nation can live only on the beneficence of other nations. A man who lives on eternal charity will soon suffer a natural death. The nation which takes to begging as the means of existence will soon be wiped off the face of the earth. So was the warning of the Swami to India that she must search out if she wants to live what she can give to the world as the price of her life. That India has survived the onslaughts of so many conquests and invasions that the inner life of India has remained undisturbed by the onrush of so many cultures and conflicting civilisations shows that India is not without something to give to the world. And so Swami with all the fervour of his being exhorted all to build the Indian national life on the old basis of religion, for only by so doing can India have an honourable place amongst the nations of the world.

About the internal problems of India Swami always advocated 'growth from within' and bringing out the latent possibilities of all concerned. During his time a section of people had a veritable craze for social reform. Though they have done no doubt, some good to the country, yet as a result of the wrong policy of denouncing everything that did not suit their reason and taste they have isolated themselves into a separate group, out of touch with the general mass. Our society has got many defects, it is true, and no society is without any. But all that is needed is to help the process of its evolution and not to suddenly disturb its even tenor of life by following some revolutionary method. So towards the social problems his attitude was one of sympathy rather than of self-conceited superiority. He would say that this society existing for thousands of years has done much good, and it will do much more good in future, if properly directed. In going to build the future according to your particular plan in trying to reform the

present, where some defects have crept in, you cannot neglect her whole past. If possible, just help society in its onward march, but do not retard its progress by any violent reform. It was a very significant, though poignant, reply of Swamiji, when being asked his opinion about widow-marriage, he said that he could not say anything, himself not being a widow. His opinion on these matters was 'Let the persons concerned decide their own fate. All that can be helped from outside is to give them ideas, which will naturally crystallise into proper actions.'

It was his firm opinion that the spread of right education will automatically solve many of the problems that have faced the country. By education he did not mean cramming the brain with ideas, which it is not in a position to assimilate and translate into action, but creating favourable circumstances wherein the mind may grow naturally. 'Education, according to him, 'is the manifestation of perfection *already* in man,' and that can be brought out only by freeing the mind from all distracting factors. 'To me the very essence of education,' said Swamiji, 'is the concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I would collect facts at will.'

In all matters, Swamiji insisted upon faith as the very essence of success. That India is lagging behind all other nations of the world is due to the fact that she has lost faith in herself due to various circumstances. If that faith can be revived, she will again be a power that nothing will be able to resist. To bring home this truth to the mind of all how significantly he would quote the examples of the Irishmen, who within a short time of their landing in America, the land of liberty and freedom, put on an altogether different look! And he would at times try to lash his countrymen into self-confidence by violent and harsh rebuke. "We have lost faith. Would

you believe me, ' he said once, ' we have less faith than the Englishman and woman, a thousand times less faith? These are the plain words, but I say, I can't help it * * * Do you know it? You know more than they do, you are more wise than is good for you, that is the difficulty. As a remedy he would suggest that the Upanishads should be upheld, which are the mine of strength, and he asked all to stand on the belief that ' we are the Soul ' "So repeat these saving words," he would say "Do not say that you are weak. You can do anything and every thing. What can we not do? We can do everything, we have got the same glorious Soul. Let us believe in it."

To him religion meant strength and irreligion fear and weakness. As a panacea for all the ills of human life he would suggest to all to assert that man is one with God. Behind every being there is the infinite Soul. But there cannot be more than one infinity the same universal Soul, omnipotent, omnipresent and immortal, is behind all. The more one can live in that idea, the less affected is he by the world and its misery. It was from this view-point that he exhorted all to know that a man becomes what he thinks himself to be.

आत्मनाविन्दते यो देव विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ।

"The knowledge of the Self gives real strength, and that leads to Immortality." But as a man lives in ignorance, he suffers and feels miserable. But that fountain of bliss is there in spite of our ignorance.

Swamiji, however, did not preach only monism and the impersonal idea of God. Monism is the last word of religion, and the highest perfection is reached by one in a million. As long as there will remain human weaknesses and failings man must worship the personal God. Hence is the necessity of the worship of Incarnations, the God-men like Buddha, Mahommed, Jesus etc., in whom we find the embodiments of the highest conceptions of religion. None can see the Father except through the Son. We, therefore, strive to realise the impersonal

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aspect of God through various forms of worship that have been in existence since the beginning of humanity

Swamiji in preaching all his ideas was not like those who soar too high from the human world on the wings of their dreams and theories. The dreamer in him did not get the better of the practical idealist. Though he spoke always from a very high altitude, though he was always forgetful of the weaknesses of persons who came in contact with him, and saw their little greatness thousandfold magnified, yet in his scheme of life he did not altogether overlook the factor of human failings. He was not unconscious that walking in truth always means a succession of falls. He knew that failures are inevitable in human life as much as successes. But should we sit with moping looks as we cannot avoid failures in life? That was the last thing he could tolerate, and had nothing but condemnation for such persons. It was a very significant reply that he gave to a man full of extreme Tamas, who came to learn religion from him. Before saying anything for religion whether he would be able to do some crime indicative of manliness, was the interrogation of Swamiji, for the man sought an easy way to religion. There is no easy road to religion as also to anything else valuable in life. The path to heaven will be always through the hell of struggle. Those who cannot stand that should better stand out of the ranks, was his strong opinion. "When the soul has wrestled with circumstances, and has met death a thousand times on the way, but nothing daunted has struggled forward again and again, and yet again," said he in his lecture on the preparation for higher life, "then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal."

This is a great lesson which we cannot be too much careful to remember, because dark phantoms of fear and despair dog our footsteps at every moment of life, in every undertaking of many of us—people who belong to a most self-forgetful nation on earth

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## MORE ABOUT AMERICA

By DR. PHILADRA NATH DUTT, M.A., PH.D.

The most important thing I have noticed in America is the method of organisation. The Christian Church has converted the old Roman system to the modern, and the Occidental world all over has accepted it. The difference between the East and the West lies in knowing the technique of organisation and applying it to life. The Oriental is a power alone, but ten Orientals are a source of weakness. One European is a source of weakness but ten Europeans are a tower of strength. Two Englishmen make a club, five Englishmen make a colony. When they combine they are a tower of strength, they achieve something but when we Orientals unite we do not achieve anything as we lack in cohesive power, power of organisation. We confuse private life with that of public life. We always go from personal to the principle. In this matter America and Europe are at variance with the rest. In America there are many political parties and sections but on public platform they vote with one voice. For that reason they can do something. They will abide by the decision of the party and leave aside personal questions and fight for the principle. We do not do it. By this power of organisation they are building up industries, commerce and have become a world-power. A professor once told me that American civilisation is a commercial one. American culture is absolutely a new culture taken from Europe in recent years, and the science is taken mostly from Germany and France. They have become self-supporting nowadays. They say America is the growth of 50 years. Fifty years ago there was a wave of revolution in Europe, and the German refugees went to America, and being educated people they transplanted German culture to America. From the standpoint of commerce, American civilisation

is very great America is a great stronghold of capitalism America is a country of immense resources Plenty of land is still unexplored, mineral resources remaining unexploited There is plenty of room for everybody A European pedlar in America starts humbly and ends his career as a capitalist The Russian Jews when persecuted come to America and become capitalists They can develop themselves there and rise to the highest level For that reason it will be the last bulwark of capitalism But along with that there is the labour question

America is not democratic, it is a plutocratic country The constitution provides that every one should vote, but the capitalists and millionaires rule They make and unmake presidents and governors Tammany Hall rules New York People say New York is the biggest Jewish town in the world, but the Irish rule it In 1913 a certain governor recently elected was at variance with Tammany Hall, because the latter wanted big spoiliations in the shape of contracts, but the governor said that was against his conscience They brought a charge against him and impeached him Twenty-four judges sat on the throne and all of them had Irish names, and he was kicked out the next day Mr Murphy is the head of Tammany Hall They say he is worth fifty millions of dollars He never comes out in the public, but rules the party from behind This is the American political system People complain against it, but there is no way out of it When one party comes to power they drive out all the officers from the president to the postmaster When a new president comes to power he gets 2 millions of posts for distribution To-day a man is a briefless lawyer and to-morrow he will be a big judge There is no civil service system or bureaucracy To-day a man is an ordinary journalist, but to-morrow he will be a governor In this way they rule the country Do they get economic justice? No America is democratic in the sense that there is 'one man one vote' system But after seeing the country as it had been my lot to see every stratum of society, I am prone to believe that there is no real demo-



democracy in America. Because there cannot be true democracy unless there is economic justice. Is it a land of freedom? Persecuted European emigrants, who with bundles of torn clothes on the shoulders make their way work in factories and become somebody. Many think it is the land of freedom.

But if you look to the condition of poor Negroes, the other side of the coin will present itself. This is a most tragic side of American life. They lay the blame at the door of the old English colonial government. The slaves were made free after the civil war. Later on by hook or crook the south disenfranchised the Negroes. The Negroes gradually lost their freedom again. Though the constitution provides it, they are not allowed to vote. They have to work in factories as menials. There is a great discontent among them. Their condition is like ours. They have no chance. Among the Negroes there are educated men, doctors, lawyers and professors. I have seen some of the Mulattoes passing themselves as domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians. The Negro problem is very acute. The Negroes are lynched and persecuted. When the white man makes a mistake it is passed over but with the Negroes it is different. When the Negro was emancipated he was illiterate. To-day by sheer dint of their own effort they have reduced the illiteracy to 40%. Every Negro in the north can write, and in the south they are more educated than the "poor Whites". Late Prof. Lester Ward narrated that whenever he in company with the scholars of the Smithsonian Institute went down south for scientific expedition, the party always used to get troubles with the superstitious poor Whites, but rescue always came from the unexpected quarters—Negroes. It is always the black man who understands something about science. The Negro is not inferior. But in the south he is superior. Still he is kept down. As a result of the Negro problem the question has arisen. What to do? The one section led by late Booker T. Washington said. 'We need not go after university diplomas, we will not get equality with the

white people Let us form ourselves a people by ourselves—a community within a community But the other party led by Dubois and Miller said "We want both technical education and higher education We must apply for political and social rights' The fight is still going on The American will solve the problem in this way He says—'Let the Negro give up the university education He will not be able to stand the competition of the white man, and the economic difficulties will crowd him out, and he will die out' A German Professor of anthropology, Mr F V Luschan told me "Yes, the Negro is dying out, that is true But the Negro blood is being diluted and is permeating the white society' That means in the course of ages 10 millions of Negroes will be mixed up in the white mass Many Americans no longer remain white, but they have become brown In the south you cannot distinguish in many cases between a Negro and a white man That is the reason why the Occidental says that out of the conquering Aryans and the black aborigines arose the modern Indians, and out of the conflict of colour arose the caste system But I do not believe in this theory That is my own personal view If you see the Negro problem, you will be struck with its similarity with the caste problem of India Once a drama was staged, called the "Nigger", the plot of which was that Clond, the governor of a certain state, did not want to give concessions to some white traders But the spokesman of these traders threatened him that if he stood on their way, then he would be exposed that the latter had Negro blood in his veins The moral is that in the south people do not go by the colour but by caste My German professor said that his American colleague had Negro blood in him, and he knew it Even Mrs Wilson was suspected of having alien blood in her veins, because her family was connected with the Red Indian Princess Pocohanta This worked as a detriment to Mr Wilson How could Wilson run for the presidency when his wife had inferior blood in her? Another example Many of the Red Indians

have white blood in them Chalisaw and Cherulee tribes are civilised I once met a young university lecturer who was a blonde man On enquiring he answered that he was a Red Indian I further enquired how he was enrolled He answered— In the states I am enrolled as an Indian When I go to England I am taken as a Yankee cousin of my English relatives! The Red Indian problem has not died out There are about 400 000 of Red Indians in America They are living not as pure, but as mixed bloods They have died out as Red Indians but they are living as civilised peoples They have to live in reservations which are like the Kolhan districts of Chota Nagpur where the Hindus would not be allowed to settle They till the land in a primitive way Once I visited the reservation land of the Ojibwa tribe in Canada I had two ladies with me One was a Vedantist who visited India and knew her conditions On enquiry I found out that every tribe has its president and secretary I asked the latter— Are you all pure Indians? He answered—“No, we are not The people will not admit it, but I know it myself My grandmother was half a French I met a pastor who had accepted Occidental civilisation He said in despair, there is no hope for them They do not get any chance to work anywhere They have to fall back on the land and till it They do not know the modern system of agriculture In some of the reservations in the United States the railway system passes through the tribal land and they manage to make money But in other reservations there is an awful woe and misery The misery under which the people are suffering is due to their adopting the white man's civilisation and not having passed through the intermediary stages necessary for the transition We have found out that in this way America is a land of liberty The American is keenly alive to it The white man thinks that the coloured man must make way to him On this account Prof Dubois the leader of the coloured race said that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of colour But the problem of Europe is

different It is the exploitation of the majority of people by a handful of people The problem of the United States also is exploitation White labour complains just the same

This again manifests in the Oriental problem Fifty years ago the Americans wanted the Orientals to settle on the banks of the Mississippi, but just after the war they do not want any emigrant at all The Orientals used to go as traders and merchants from the Bombay side, and they made a lot of money The Americans said— If you do not settle in the country, we will not allow you" Then Bengal traders began to come and sell linen stuff and go about as pedlars Once a Sikh regiment was disbanded at Hongkong which crossed the sea and went to Vancouver Finding the country too cold they went south The Americans complain that the Hindus work on low salary, and they live in a primitive style The Indians say on the contrary that they were persecuted, they did not get any shelter The employing railway company gave them wagons to sleep in at the place of their work At the present most of the Hindus have come back home After the passing of the Anti-alien Act they are losing proprietary rights There is nothing to be done The Americans said in the beginning that if proper representation would come from the British Government, something would be considered But nothing was done in that line This stood in the way of poor Indian students getting education there Any way, we had a chance in America Several hundred boys went there as self-supporting students, they made their way by working in the fields, restaurants etc In this way they got university education and became teachers, doctors and business men But such boys did not get a chance in this country In future they will not get any more chance in America When I was in Berlin conducting the Indian News and Information Bureau, I used to get hundreds of letters from boys enquiring about the chances of self-support in Germany Education in India is only for the rich, and the poor student has no

chance to get the up to date education in foreign lands. In those days the American universities used to exhort the Indians to come over to their places. But to day chauvinism is running amock, which has resulted in America becoming a heaven for the Europeans and not for the non white Orientals. Even the Armenians and Persians are allowed to enter, but the Asiatics living beyond Persia up to the frontier of Japan cannot enter the land as they are supposed to be unassimilable. To-day those Indians who became citizens have been deprived of their citizenship, and they have become a people without a country.

But any way we have lots of things to learn from America. The difference between the two races lies in their outlook. Proof: Lester Ward, the father of American sociology, said, there is no difference between the East and the West. The difference lies only in the world-view. If we change the world-view, we change the race. You cannot change the heredity, but through education you can modify the aspect of life and the attitude towards the world. In this way we should change our mentality. He prophesied about Japan long ago. They are going in the van of civilisation. Psychologists say that unless the race adapts itself to the new conditions of life, it will have to go down and be side tracked for ever. If we want to survive, we must adapt ourselves to the new conditions, react to the new stimuli. Our leaders talk of going back to Vedic culture and doing all kinds of wonderful things, but we will not survive unless we change our world-views. We must adapt rationalistic world-views and social politics. We must take what is best in every country and from America we must learn the dignity of labour. To-day there is a new group of sociologists who are moving towards rationalism. So they are going ahead. We must copy the American system of organisation and spirit. India must come out of her seclusion. Thus I say India must accept and imitate the American spirit.

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of organisation and the dignity of labour This is the thing we have to learn

And in return if we want to give something new to the world, then we must adapt ourselves to new conditions We have to make some new original contributions to the world's culture There is enough scope for the Hindus to give their best to the world We must try to move with the world-currents and react to the new stimuli coming out of the same and must adjust ourselves accordingly Then and then alone we can survive in the struggle of the world

THE GREAT TORCH-BEARER

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Once the great queens of all the nations of the world met at an assembly to exhibit before the world their respective national achievements They came there dressed in their finest clothings bedecked with jewels that cast into shade the blaze of the noonday sun, as it were Their faces shone with the freshness of youth and pride of their culture Fluttering they moved in the great hall, narrating to one another the stories of the countries they represented In a corner sat a venerable lady, unnoticed and despised, though representing a country wherein flourished the oldest civilisation humanity has ever witnessed With great difficulty she moved to the front, and as she was about to speak, her voice was drowned amidst the peel of laughter raised in disdain by her younger sisters "Why, we don't know her," said they to one another But undaunted the old lady said raising her high and dignified voice, "Listen to me, my dear sisters Blinded with pride and arrogance, you seem to have forgotten me I am your eldest sister My country has supplied you with all your riches and wealth, material as well as intel-

lectual. Everything that is great and noble in you has been supplied by me. You do not seem to know that shooting up like rockets you are mocking at the serene and calm star. But unless you again clasp your hand in mine may heaven forbid it your path seems to be strewn with peril." As her voice sonant and vibrant, rolled in that great hall, they wondered at and bowed before her, yielding to her the place of honour she richly deserved in that comity of the nations.

Swami Vivekananda delivered his first message at the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. He stood there at the confluence of two mighty streams of thought. Before him was a sea of mind—youth, tumultuous, overflowing with its own energy and self-assurance, yet inquisitive and alert withal. Behind him on the contrary lay an ocean calm with long ages of spiritual development. Behind him lay a world that dated itself from the Vedas and remembered itself in the Upanishads, a world to which Buddhism was almost modern, a world that was filled with religious systems of faiths and creeds, a quiet land steeped in the sunlight of the tropics, the dust of whose roads had been trodden of the feet of the saints for ages upon ages. A warrior-monk he stood there, instinct with pride of country, and pride of race and by no means inclined to yield as though the hoary faith he embodied was in aught inferior to the noblest there. India was not to be shamed before the hurrying arrogant West by this her envoy and her son. He brought her message—he spoke in her name, and the herald remembered the dignity of the sacred land whence he came. Purposeful, virile and strong he stood out a prince among men, able to hold his own, and delivered the message of his motherland before the world at large.

Swami Vivekananda delivered before that great assembly a message which the world needs now and then to readjust itself and to save itself from an imminent ruin. Speaking briefly the Western world had been reeling under the hammer-blow of an uninspired materialism. People did not care to see anything beyond the

tip of their nose. Let every man take care of himself and devil the hindmost—such was the accepted shibboleth of the time. The struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest and such horrible legacies of the evolution theory completely overpowered the mind of the people. Hatred and jealousy reigned supreme, and there was no amity between man and man, class and class and nation and nation. Even the religion of Christian Europe did not rise up to the mark. It supplied the motive-power for many a political and commercial exploitation, and it was utilised as a tool for some mean and unworthy purposes by the commercial and political magnates. By creating exclusive privileges for its own votaries and claiming for them alone the rights to live under the sun, Christianity revealed before the world, in its naked horror, the ugly trait of the church. Instead of proving a soothing balm for the sore of humanity, religion itself became a great pest. At this juncture the conception of a Universal Religion—the Cult of the Future—was only an imperative necessity. Swamiji rose to the height of expectation before the accredited representatives of the different religions of the world. While different people sang the hallelujah of their respective faiths, he at once delivered the message of a religion which is broad as the sky and deep as the ocean, to which every religion was "only a travelling, a coming-up, of different men and women through various conditions and circumstances to the same goal—a religion which proclaimed that 'the Truth is one though the sages call It by different names'." The ideal of Hinduism which he preached there was all-inclusive and wonderfully catholic. "From the highest spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy," to quote his own words "of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the lowest ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all 'have a place in the Hindu religion'." The people were astounded by the very directness and boldness of Swamiji's message. In truth, the idea of the Parliament of Religions was con-

ceived to prove to the world the innate superiority of Christianity. But the engineer was hoisted by his own petard. The lion was challenged and humbled in his own den. The message of Swami Vivekananda is fraught with a great potentiality for religion and science alike. It is destined to usher in a new world where religion will be scientific and science religious.

While he voiced forth the message of his people, 'in the youth and noonday of the West, in the words of Sister Nivedita, 'a nation, sleeping in the shadows of the darkened half of earth on the far side of the Pacific, waited in spirit for the words that would be borne on the dawn that was travelling towards them, to reveal to them the secret of their own greatness and strength.' Swami Vivekananda was born in a critical period of the Indian history. Physically, morally and spiritually, we sank to the nadir of degradation. The political slavery for hundreds of years, the utter decadence of our national culture for want of encouragement and the monopoly of religion by the priests and unworthy Pandits contributed to this downfall. To the keen and penetrating intellect of Swamiji this was but too apparent. Besides, he knew that at the root of our national greatness lay the ideal of the Spirit—a firm belief in the immortality of Self, its strength, splendour, glory and might. Our religion is great because it proclaims the glory of Atman, because it enables man to realise the grandest of all truths—I am Brahman—the undying and unborn Self which the sword cannot pierce, fire cannot burn, water cannot sink and air cannot blow up. Before the consciousness of this identity of the individual soul and Paramatman, all fear vanishes, all narrowness disappears, all cowardice and superstition melt away like the mist before the splendour of the blazing sun. He preached incessantly the message of this Atman throughout the length and breadth of his country in order to raise the sleeping leviathan from its age-long torpor. Again and again he exhorted his countrymen not to look to extraneous help for their national or individual salvation but

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to tap the fountain of perennial strength that lay hidden within them. He was convinced that the realisation of this great spiritual ideal would alone enable India to rehabilitate her lost glory.

Swami Vivekananda was a message-bearer by Divine right. He spoke "like one having authority and not as the scribes." He is one of those few souls who visit our planet now and then, appointed, as it were, by some Divine Agency. From his very boyhood, he felt that he had a message to give to the world. His Master at once recognised it in him. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna Deva once remarked, "In my Naren the light of Knowledge shines like the sun. He is indeed the lotus with thousand petals." Though appearing like the sounds of distant footfalls at the beginning, the call of this mission became clear to him ere long on account of some very strange experiences he had to undergo during the early part of his life. His thorough knowledge of Indian scripture, philosophy and history, his training and realisation, his Master's great prophecies regarding his future career, his grasp of the Western philosophy, the constant study of the unique life of his Master in which he found the key to our real national existence, his travels all over his motherland during which he availed himself of ready opportunities of comparing her with what she had been and was—all these prepared him and made him fitter to find out the way for our great national deliverance. Mixing with princes and peasants, saints and scholars, he grasped in its comprehensiveness the vast whole of the Indian nation of which his Master's life and personality had been a brief and intense epitome. As writes Sister Nivedita, "These then,—the Shastra, the Guru and the Motherland,—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda. These are the treasures which it is his to offer."

Thus when the great Swami Vivekananda came out before the world to play his part he was irresistible like a lion. Nothing could daunt him, nothing could swerve him from his path by so much as a jot or tittle. He

delivered his own message before the world. He interpreted the books after his own fashion. He did not follow any beaten track. He took humanity ahead with him by clearing the path with his own strength. Thus it was that he wrote to a friend: "I have a message, and I will give it after my own fashion. I will neither Hinduise my message, nor Christianise, nor make it any 'ism' in the world. I will only *my* it and that is all." Once in Madras he was assailed with the question, "How could you reconcile the bellicose creeds of monism, qualified monism and dualism, whose differences have been so forcefully accentuated by the great Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva?" He thundered out in response: "Because it was left for me to do it! Because I was born to show this to the world!" Once again he exclaimed in the same strain: "I have realised the Absolute in the superconscious state. I am the proof of the Vedas!" Really in him we find the fulfilment of the scriptural saying: "By knowing Brahman, one verily becomes Brahman."

His message had such supreme force because he always felt the two hands of the Mother holding his own in their grasp. He knew that he was an instrument in the hand of God and that God was working through him. "So long," he wrote to his Gurubhais at the Math from America, "as you have the faith that the Lord is working through me, and will work through me so long as I am in this body, you need have no fear of anything. No evil will befall you!" His only reply to an Englishman who treated him rather ungentlemanly, taking him for an ordinary Sadhu, was, "I am Vivekananda! Who are you?"

If a man's longevity is to be judged by the amount of work he does, then, Swami Vivekananda lived for centuries in that span of ten years that was vouchsafed to him to work in India and abroad. These were years of intense work and incessant struggle. The path before him was not strewn with roses. Like all great souls of his ilk Swami had to pass through many turnpikes and

many doors before he came to occupy the eminence that is his to-day in the world. Malicious campaigns were set on foot against him. But like the snake that raises its hood when smitten, Swamiji also revealed himself strangely during these periods of difficulties and oppositions. Thus he wrote to an American friend in sublime scorn of the world, who brought to his notice a virulent type of machinations organised to belittle him by an interested body of Christian Missionaries.

What are men? He is with me, the Beloved. He was with me when I was in America, in England, when I was roaming about unknown from place to place in India. What do I care about what they talk—the babies, they do not know anything better. What! I, who have realised the Spirit, and the vanity of all earthly nonsense, to be swerved from my path by babies' prattle!

*"I feel my task is done—at most three or four years more of life is left. I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly enjoyments. I must see my machine in a strong working order, and then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep without caring what will be next, and may I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.*

*"He who is the high and the low, the saint and the sinner, the God and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent, and break all other idols.*

*In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always had been and always will be one, Him worship and break all other idols.*

*"My time is short. I have got to unbreast whatever I have to say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates*

others. Therefore, my dear M—, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the power behind me is not Vivekananda, but the Lord, and He knows best.

With tremendous success he delivered his message. The world was taken by surprise at its very directness and boldness. But he had to pass through a valley of death before he could attain success in any scheme of his work. Straight he looked at it. He is, indeed, the greatest torch bearer of the modern age and took humanity ahead with him cheering it always with the cry, "Onward Ho!"

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## JESUS THE CHRIST

By SWAMI ATULANANDA

### III

Hidden from human disturbance in a mountain cave, Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days and forty nights. In the seclusion of his retreat he meditated mounting to higher and higher states of consciousness. The world began to vanish like a dream. Veil after veil of delusion was torn aside till at last his soul freed from all bondage roared into the realm of Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

But Jesus was not forever to bathe in that ocean of Superconscious Bliss. He had been born for a great purpose, to teach humanity. The world burdened with the heavy load of sin cried out for deliverance. That cry pierced Jesus' heart. And from it came flowing a stream of divine love and compassion. Then the gentle voice of recollection breathed softly into his ears. 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.'

With a deep sigh, half conscious, his eyes filled with tears of joy, his face shining with a heavenly light Jesus stammered in broken accents, "My Lord and my God Thy will be done."

Even as his soul had risen step by step to the highest realisation, so 'step by step' was the descent to external consciousness

It was a painful process. Absorbed in God-consciousness Jesus had been lifted above human limitations. Now, gradually, the naked realism of life began to present itself to his vision. He saw spreading before him in moving scenes the torture of his human existence. Three years yet he was to walk on earth—three years of persecution. Only a few would believe in him. The rest would mock and obstruct him. And then the final scene—a howling mob spitting and striking at him, dragging him to Golgotha, nailing him to the cross.

Weak and emaciated from long fasting, these sad forebodings began to agitate his mind, and his human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited him. Then Jesus was tempted.

The coarser temptations of an ordinary man could no longer assail one who from his youth had battled with human passions. But there are subtler temptations met by persons of exceptional spiritual attainment, crucial tests which put to proof the soul's real sincerity. These tests come in the presentation of supernatural powers. These powers when exercised for selfish ends bind the soul to the 'psychic plane, and put a halt to further spiritual progress.

Jesus, then, shrinking from the terrible mental and physical suffering that awaited him began to question the necessity of undergoing the ordeal. Was he not the Son of God? Could he not shape his own destiny? Could he not accomplish his mission and avoid the torture? An entire life spent in austere self-discipline, abstinence and absolute purity, had given him power over the subtler forces of nature. But he had never tested these powers. Why not try them out? These powers would come most useful to him in his future work. If he could really perform miracles, the people might believe in him. And the absolute assurance that he had power over nature would inspire him with strength and confidence.

As if in answer to these thoughts flashing through his mind, Jesus, in a vision, is suddenly confronted by a bright angel Satan, personification of man's weaker tendencies, appeared in the disguise of a benevolent spirit to tempt the Saviour

Is it not always so? Temptations do not approach us in their dark, ugly, coarser nature, they visit us in their most alluring guise

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we find these simple words. And when Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights he hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'

Here we see the objectification of Jesus' own thoughts. Weak and faint from fasting, worn with mental agony, craving for food, Jesus' mind laid itself open to doubt. One doubt makes room for others. First Jesus questioned the necessity for his future suffering, then came the doubt whether or not he really possessed supernatural powers and lastly crept in the doubt regarding his sonship to God. "If thou art the Son of God," the tempter said.

Shut off from the presence of God, Jesus now doubted the genuineness of his previous realisations. Was it true that a voice from heaven had spoken, 'This is my beloved Son,' or had it only been the voice of his own mind? A cloud of gloom seemed to envelop him.

Jesus felt the need of nourishment. There was no food in the desert. He could not begin his work in such a weak condition. The angel's suggestion seemed timely and reasonable. 'Let me see if I can perform the miracle,' Jesus thought. 'Let me see if through the exertion of my will the stones will be transformed into bread.'

It was a critical moment. Jesus fixes his eyes on the angel, seems with his glance to bore through the angel. Then his gaze turns inward. His eyebrows contract, his features become set, his body rigid. He stands like an image graven of stone.

A moment. Then comes the reawakening—a tremor

~~~~~  
of the body, a deep sigh The eyes open And looking upward Jesus cries out, 'Heavenly Father, I am Thy son Do not forsake me Not in my own power, but in Thy strength I take refuge To serve Thee will be my food Nourish me with Thy presence, give me to drink the waters of Thy grace "

Then rebuking the tempter, he said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by obeying every word of God "

Jesus had stood the test His finer, real nature had asserted itself But a subconscious train of questioning thoughts set into motion is not easily stopped Another vision follows 'Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down , for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee , and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou clash thy foot against a stone ' "

Yes, even the devil quotes scripture If we can find no other justification of a weak, sinful act, it is so convenient to quote some text Scriptures are so elastic, and the mind is so cunning when it acts in self-defence

As one doubt leads to another doubt, so one victory leads to another victory Jesus has conquered once This time there is little struggle The very suggestion to put God to the test seems low and mean Instantly Jesus replies, 'It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God ' "

And now comes the last trial Jesus finds himself placed on the summit of a high mountain And as he looks down into the valley below, the devil shows him the kingdoms of the world passing in a panoramic view before his sight Jesus gazed upon a scene of unsurpassed loveliness and prosperity Then the tempter said, "The power and glory of ruling these kingdoms I can give thee If thou wilt bow down and worship me, all shall be thine "

This was by far the severest test There was then

a way to escape from his suffering. By accepting the offer, by a slight compromise of conscience, Jesus could be made king over vast dominions. That was exactly what the Jews expected of their deliverer. And would he not reach their hearts far better if he had worldly power, if he could offer them a prosperous kingdom and independence?

It seemed so plausible, so practical. But no, Jesus pure heart could not for long be deceived by sophistry. Independence does not make a nation holy, rather, holiness brings independence. By becoming free in the prevailing state of corruption the Jews would only exalt in their newly acquired power, and their sins would increase. The nation must change her heart, then external conditions would improve of themselves. A violent and sudden change would not improve the soul of the race.

And had not God shown him that his mission could be fulfilled only through suffering? Had he not seen God's plan unroll itself before him? Was it not the Father's will that he would suffer taking upon himself the sins of his race? He must not give in to Satan—his own impatient stubborn will.

Not by a life of ease and prosperity and worldly power could his great mission be served. His path had to be one of patient suffering, of worldly disappointment of human ignominy. Through renunciation, by surrendering to God's will, through suffering, great things are accomplished.

When he comes to this decision the struggle is over. Jesus raising himself to his full length, his eyes flashing with indignation, facing the tempter, flings at him the stern command 'Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!'

The victory was complete. Divinity had triumphed. Faith, sincere faith had conquered doubt. Satan, defeated slinks away covered with shame. The vision melts away. Jesus is left master of the situation. He had triumphed over his own mind.

The combat, however, leaves Jesus utterly exhausted. He sinks down to the earth. The pallor of death is upon his face, he is about to swoon.

But the angels of heaven have watched the conflict. Now they descend with song and music, and minister unto the Lord. They bathe his throbbing brow, feed him with the nectar of life. And holding him up in their arms, they comfort him with the message of his Father's love, and the assurance that all heaven triumphs in his victory. And placing flowers at his feet they worship him.

Jesus, refreshed in body and mind, jubilant in spirit, guided by his Father's hand, leaves the mountains for the plains of Galilee. His great heart goes out in sympathy for man. And he begins his work, not to rest till his task is done, and his sacrifice is complete.

We cannot follow Jesus during his three years of public life. We can only hint at the main principles that inspired his own life, and which he presented to those who heard him.

Jesus taught, as all Avatars have taught, that religion should not stop at external observances. It must become an experience of the heart. It must express itself in a holy life of love and service to God and man. By giving the Jews a higher code of ethics and morals he wanted to improve their national character. By placing before them a higher conception of God he wanted to rouse their spiritual nature.

To the Jews God was a far distant stern Judge, before whose tribunal every human being, after death, must appear for judgment. Jesus gave them a nobler ideal. He taught them to look up to God as to a merciful, loving Father, close to every human heart that will accept Him, not a God to be met after death, but an ever-present Spiritual Reality to be known here and now.

To know God, he said, man must be born again. The human consciousness in man must die, that the Spiritual Consciousness may take birth. For "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in

spirit and in truth And knowing how difficult it is for the human mind to rise to God consciousness, he revealed his own divinity, and his power and willingness to help all humanity to reach that state 'I came forth from the Father,' he said, 'and am come into the world again, I leave the world and go to the Father,' for, "I and the Father are one" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath everlasting life"

The human in Jesus served him only to carry out his mission in this world to do the will of his Father The divine in him united him constantly with God That others might also enjoy this communion with God, he taught the path of devotion of prayer without ceasing, of renunciation and self-surrender to God

Let us remember that though Jesus laid aside his body amidst scenes of greatest humiliation, his spirit rose to the Realm of Bliss from which he came, where even now he shines, in his own sphere, as one of the great luminaries, a centre of Light and Love in the infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss

And every one who takes refuge in him finds within his own heart a ray of Jesus' luminosity, feels his infinite love ever drawing like a magnet, hears his voice calling, ever calling, from within 'Come unto me, and I will give you life immortal'

For this was Jesus' prayer That they all may be made perfect in one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA

(Continued from p 89)

अर्यस्य साधने सिद्ध उत्कर्षे रक्षणे व्यये ॥

नाशोपभोग आयासस्त्रासश्चिन्ता भ्रमो नृणाम् ॥ १७ ॥

17 Whether in the acquisition of wealth or, after it has been acquired, in the increase, maintenance, expenditure, enjoyment or loss of it, men undergo exertion,¹ fear, anxiety and delusion

[1 Exertion &c—as the case may be]

स्तेयं हिंसानृतं दम्भः कामः क्रोधः स्मयो मदः ॥

भेदो वैरमविश्वासः संस्पर्धा व्यसनानि च ॥ १८ ॥

एते पञ्चदशानर्था ह्यर्थमूला मता नृणाम् ॥

तस्मादनर्थमर्थाख्य श्रेयोर्यो दूरतस्त्यजेत् ॥ १९ ॥

18-19 Theft, injury to others, falsehood, ostentation, lust, anger, pride, haughtiness, dissention, enmity, distrust, competition and the three kinds of indulgence—these fifteen evils pertaining to men are considered to be the outcome of wealth Therefore one desirous of well-being should shun from a distance the evil known as wealth

[The evil effects of riches are set forth in verses 18-21

[1 Three kinds &c—viz those relating to sex, wine and gambling]

मिथ्यन्ते भ्रातरो दाराः पितरः सुहृदस्तथा ॥

एकास्त्रिधाः काकिणिना सद्यः सर्वेऽरयः कृता ॥ २० ॥

20 Brothers, wives, fathers and friends, who were very near and dear to the heart, are all instantly alienated and turned into foes by even an insignificant sum of money

अर्थेनाल्पीयसा एते संख्या दीप्तमन्यवः ।

त्यजन्त्याशुत्पृधो घ्नन्ति सदसोत्सृज्य सौहृदम् ॥ २१ ॥

21 Even the least amount of money upsets them and inflames their anger, so that they immediately part company, and all at once abandoning cordiality they rival and even kill one another

लब्ध्वा जन्मामप्राप्य मानुष्यं तद्भिजाप्रताम् ॥

तदनादृत्य ये स्वार्थं घ्नन्ति यान्त्यशुर्मा गतिम् ॥ २२ ॥

22 Attaining a human birth which even the gods covet and being good Brahmannas at that, those who disregard this and mar their own interests,¹ meet with an evil end

[¹ *Interests*—viz. Self-realisation]

स्वर्गापवर्गेयोर्द्वारं प्राप्य लोभमिमं पुमान् ॥

द्रविणे कोऽनुपज्जेत मर्त्योऽनर्थस्य धामनि ॥ २३ ॥

23 What mortal man would after attaining this body which is the gateway to heaven and liberation, get attached to money which is the abode of evil?

देवर्षिपितृभूतानि क्षातीन्वन्धूंश्च भागिनः ॥

असविमज्य चात्मान यक्षवित्तं पतत्यथ ॥ २४ ॥

24 The miser who hoards money like the proverbial Yaksha,¹ without sharing it with the gods,² the Rishis the manes lower animals, relatives,³ friends and other legitimate shares in it as well as himself, goes to degradation

[¹ *Yaksha*—a species of superhuman beings possessing immense wealth which they simply keep hidden without using it for themselves or others]

² *Gods &c*—The reference is to the *Panchayajna* or the fivefold sacrifice which every householder is required to perform

³ *Relatives &c*—coming under the head of man in the list]

व्यर्थयाऽर्थेहया वित्तं प्रमत्तस्य वयो बलम् ॥

कुशला येन सिध्यन्ति जरठ किं नु साधये ॥ २५ ॥

25 Oh, I was deluded by a fruitless search for wealth which has now gone, along with my age and

strength Well, what could a decrepit man like me achieve through that which helps men of discrimination alone to attain the goal?

कस्मात्संक्लिश्यते विद्वान्व्यर्थयाऽर्थेहयाऽसकृत् ॥

कस्यविन्मायया नून लोकोऽयं सुविमोहितः ॥ २६ ॥

26 Why are even learned men tormented time and again by the vain quest for wealth? Surely this world is utterly deluded by Somebody's inscrutable Power¹

किं धनैर्धनदैर्वा किं कामैर्वा कामदैरुत ॥

मृत्युना ग्रस्यमानस्य कर्ममिवोत्तजन्मदैः ॥ २७ ॥

27 What can a man in the jaws of death want with wealth or the bestower of wealth, with desires or those who fulfil those desires, or with works¹ which but lead to rebirth?

[1 Works—such as the *Agnihotra* which being done with selfish motives never confer liberation]

नूनं मे भगवांस्तुष्टः सर्वदेवमयो हरिः ॥

येन नीतो दशमेता निर्वेदश्चात्मनः प्लवः ॥ २८ ॥

28 Surely the Lord Hari, who is the embodiment of all the gods, is pleased with me, for He has brought me to such a crisis, in which I have got that world-weariness which is a raft¹ for the struggling soul

[1 Raft—to cross the ocean of transmigration]

सोऽहं कालावशेषेण शोषयिष्येऽङ्गमात्मनः ॥

अप्रमत्तोऽखिलस्वार्थे यदि स्यात्सिद्ध आत्मनि ॥ २९ ॥

29 So during the remainder of my life—if at all there is any left—I shall mortify the body, satisfied with the Self alone and attending to all that conduces to well-being

तत्र मामनुमोदेरन्देवास्त्रिभुवनेश्वराः ॥

मुहुर्तेन ब्रह्मलोकं खट्वाङ्गः समसाधयत् ॥ ३० ॥

30 May the gods who rule the three worlds bless me in this! Well, Khattāṅga¹ attained to the sphere of the Lord in twenty-four minutes

[It happened—as a lin who coming to know through the kindness of the gods that only 24 minutes of his life was left devoted himself whole heartedly to the meditation of God and in that short time attained realization]

(To be continued)

NEWS AND NOTES

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION

The first Convention of the Ramakrishna Order will be held at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, the headquarters of the Order, from the 1st to the 7th of April, 1926. All the branch centres as well as the lay members of the Mission have been invited to attend the session. The object of this momentous gathering is to discuss the ideals of the Order and to devise means for translating them into practice by a hearty co operation among the different centres. In connection with this there will be three public meetings—two of them devoted to religious lectures by distinguished Swamis as well as sympathisers of the Order and the third to a lecture on Hygiene by a Calcutta specialist illustrated by bioscope. It is hoped the functions will be a great success. Friends of the Order can help in the work of the Convention by contributing to its funds. Particulars may be had on application to the Secretary of the Convention P. O. Belur, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA IN INDIA

We accord our hearty welcome to Swami Paramananda who has just returned to India after his long sojourn in the United States of America for a period of nearly fifteen years. As the readers of the Prabuddha Bharata are aware, he has been successfully preaching the Gospel of Vedanta to the citizens of America from his centres at Boston and La Crescenta in California since the year 1906 when he first went to the West. He is not only an impressive speaker, but also a fine poet, having already published several dainty volumes which have been well appreciated by the Western public. The Swami will stay in his

mother-country for a few months, in the course of which he wishes to visit some of the centres of the Ramakrishna Order. The Ananda Ashrama which he has recently started at La Crescenta is growing apace, and he will return there in the ensuing summer, probably accompanied by one or two other Swamis to help him in his work. Swami Paramananda looks extremely youthful for his age, and is very kind and genial in his dealings with the public.

THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The sixty-fourth birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda that fell in the month of January, 1926, was celebrated with due pomp and solemnity in India, Burma and Ceylon, and some countries of the West. Here in India his birthday has become a national festival and found a place in the national calendar, and it was observed throughout the length and breadth of the country as a day of consecration with Puja, Homa, feeding of the poor and a discussion of his life and teachings. Abroad, specially in the Federated Malay States, Persia and the United States of America, his followers and admirers observed the day with great fervour and enthusiasm.

It is indeed a happy sign of the times that the number of the admirers of the Swami is increasing day by day, and we are getting reports of his birthday celebration from many parts, which, we are sorry to say, we cannot publish in our paper for want of space. One thing that we want to emphasise here is that let us not, in our admiration for the man, forget the principles that he embodied in life. Swami Vivekananda was the personification of religious toleration, soul-force and service of humanity. Let us all remember that and try to imitate him when we celebrate his birthday.

THE ANTI-MALARIA CONFERENCE AT THE BELUR MATH

A conference of all the Anti-Malaria Societies in Howrah and Hooghly districts was held at the Rama-

Krishna Math, Belur, Howrah on Sunday, 7th February, at 1-30 p.m. About 300 delegates representing 80 societies attended the conference. Besides several visitors from Calcutta, Belur and other places, the representatives of the Central Anti-Malaria Society and the Health Officers of Howrah and Hooghly, the following gentlemen were present on invitation: Sir K. C. Bose, M.T., Dr. Bepin Behari Ghose of Calcutta, Mr. G. S. Dutt, I.C.S., Major J. C. De, I.M.S., Police Surgeon, Calcutta, Ray A. C. Banerjee Bahadur M.A., M.L.C., Mr. N. N. Bose, Bar-at-Law of Bengal Scouts, Ray Dr. G. C. Chatterjee Bahadur and Mr. A. M. Watson, Editor 'Statesman'.

The Belur Boy Scouts with their picturesque dress made a guard of honour for the delegates and visitors arriving at the conference. Miss J. MacLeod presided over the deliberations and Brahmachari Bhairav Chaitanya of the Belur Math took an active part in the convening of the conference and did much to make it a success. The following resolutions were passed at the conference:

1. How the Boy Scouts Movement could be utilised for carrying on anti-malaria work in villages.

2. To request the Government to form a Provincial Village Improvement Board consisting of all the high Officials of the different departments of the Government to solve all the difficulties of the Anti-Malaria Societies and villages.

3. To form Boards on a co-operative basis consisting of representatives of all the Anti-Malaria Societies concerned for excavating the dead rivers the Saraswati and the Kana-Damodar by issuing shares and taking loan from the Government which will be repaid in instalments by profits from irrigation and fishery rights.

Sriji Tarak Nath Mukherjee, M.L.C., Vice-Chairman District Board, Howrah has been elected President, and Ray A. C. Dutt Bahadur, Retired District Magistrate, has been elected Vice-President of the provincial committee formed.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPATH, DEOGHAR

The Griha-Pravesh ceremony of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, a residential school for boys at Deoghar, Bihar, took place on the morning of the 18th January last

Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj, President, Swami Shankarananda, Swami Dhirananda and several other Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Mission graced the occasion by their presence. Many guardians of the Vidyapith boys, together with a number of other guests and a big representative gathering from the local public, made the function a really imposing one.

The sublimity of the occasion was heightened when Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj carried with due reverence the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna to the new buildings and performed Puja and Aratrik in the midst of the blowing of conches, singing of hymns and religious songs. The guests then attended the worship of Goddess Saraswati, which was being performed in the neighbouring room. At about 2 p m all invited, monks, guests and also poor labourers of the locality, were sumptuously entertained with Prasad.

The annual prize distribution ceremony of the institution was held on the following day at 3 p m. After some beautiful recitations by the boys, Srimat Swami Shivananda Maharaj distributed the prizes, and the meeting was concluded by short addresses to the boys, given by His Holiness and Swami Nirvedananda.

The delight and enthusiasm of all present made the function a complete success.

THE COMING KUMBHA MELA

We beg to announce to the public that the Purna Kumbha Mela comes off at Hardwar in 1927, after a lapse of twelve years. Considering the improvement and expansion of roads and railways and other available conveyances, we expect that a far larger number of pilgrims will congregate at Hardwar than at the past Kumbha Mela celebrations.

The Ramanakrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kankhal, Hardwar, will take up the work of alleviating the sufferings of the sick, helpless pilgrims in all possible ways on the occasion. As pre arrangement is imperatively necessary to meet the exigencies of the situation properly and successfully, the Sevashrama is preparing itself beforehand and is appealing to the generous public for funds.

The work of the Sevashrama in this line will comprise the following items —(i) *Permanent Hospital Relief Section* It will have 1 doctor, 2 compounders, 1 dresser and several nurses, and they will be in charge of the Permanent Hospital except the Cholera Section (ii) *Temporary Relief Section* It will have 1 doctor, 1 compounder and 2 nurses, and they will go round every day from camp to camp to find out patients, who are unable to come to the Sevashrama, and treat them there. They will also inform the Headquarters, if they find any case requiring removal to the Hospital (iii) *Special Cholera Relief Section* This department will consist of several groups of volunteers, and they will attend to the nursing of cholera patients in a Special Ward, bring in patients on Ambulance cars, burn dead bodies and disinfect the affected areas (iv) *Kitchen Section* The workers of this Section will take charge of the Kitchen and Stores and prepare food for the patients, workers and guests.

To carry out this plan successfully the Sevashrama will have to requisition the services of several trained workers and doctors from outside. Moreover, medicines, diets and other necessities will be needed specially for that occasion. All these will involve a great expense. We hope that the generous public will come forward and send in their contributions in time, so that the Sevashrama may work out its noble scheme of service. Contributions may be sent to the following addresses —(i) Swami Kalyanananda, Secretary, R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal Hardwar U. P. (ii) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee's Lane Baghbazar, Calcutta (iii) President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah, Bengal.

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Edited by SYUD HOSSAIN

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SOME OF THE CONTRIBUTORS

AE, C F Andrews, Edwin Bjorkman, Claude Bragdon, Prof Edward G Browne (of Cambridge, England) L Cranmer Byng (Editor, "Wisdom of the East" Series), Witter Bynner, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Prof John Dewey, Grace Ellison, Mahatma Gandhi, John Haynes Holmes Benjamin Guy Horniman, Count Alfred Korzybski Robert Mors Lovett, Naardyn Lyska, Alexander Meiklejohn, Prof Paul Monroe, Sarojini Naidu, Yone Noguchi, Giovanni Papini, Marmaduke Picthall, Paul Richard, Romain Rolland, Bertrand Russell Rabindranath Tagore and H G Wells

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At six o'clock it was an inspiring sight to see the students march in procession with the chanting of Han Om towards the meditation platform arranged under the shady spreading oak, and then to sit in squatting Yoga posture to perform the morning meditation.

After half an hour of silent contemplation, the Swami read to us from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna as yet not translated into English.

By listening to these wonderful conversations and teachings of Bhavanagar Sri Ramakrishna recorded by M in these rare books, we at times would be transported into the banks of the Ganges and stand in the living presence of the Master, as it were.

At noon we again congregated for meditation in the same manner, and the Swami read to us the instructions of Kapila to his mother Devahuti, from the Shrimat Bhagavatam. Until we heard the Swami, we had never known that this ancient book contained such rare gems of spiritual wisdom leading us almost to the threshold of Divine Illumination.

Again when the surrounding hills of the coast-ranges reflected the glow of the setting sun and the gradual approach of the evening dusk would transform nature into the misty grey, we would sit in rapt meditation, and the Swami would slowly awaken us from its charms by his mellifluous Sanskrit chants, which we so love to hear again and again.

The two meals cooked and supervised by the ladies were served in the big dining room at eight-thirty a.m., and four-thirty p.m. The Swami called these meals 'offerings' and each one of us had to learn the Sanskrit chant for offering, 'Brahmarpanam' etc., and repeated in unison before each meal. At the end of each meal the Swami would give us choicest utterances of our revered Swami Vivekananda from different volumes of his Complete Works.

The culmination of the month was the Dhum Night. We all looked forward to it and tried as earnestly as possible to prepare ourselves for it. We tried to learn

what seeds of egoism, pettiness, jealousy, etc., were still in us, taking root and growing. And truly it did seem like a rooting-out, a cleansing and a purification when we cast these seeds into the Sacred flames. It was in very truth the beginning of a new life.

The Dhuni Fire was lighted on one of the Ashrama hills, a hill rendered especially sacred because of the many Dhuni Fires and services held there. All through the night until dawn there was chanting, singing, meditation, reading, the ceremony of the burning of our faults, etc. And at dawn as we watched for the rising of the sun, suddenly the crescent of the new moon appeared from behind the hills, sharp and thin like a scimitar. This new moon seemed another symbol of the cutting of the knots of our hearts and of the beginning of a purer, ever more purposeful life.

During the month besides the regular meditations and classes, each student was asked to observe a day of silence with the repetition of the Divine name.

On the last Sunday of the month the neighbours were invited and treated to a sumptuous feast of Indian rice, curry and other delicacies cooked by the Swami himself.

The students as well as the children of neighbours gave recitations and sang songs, all enjoying immensely such a social gathering to which they look forward with great joy and interest.

No one can comprehend what a boon this Ashrama has been to us, living in the midst of constant rush and frenzied activities of the city life. It is no wonder that our hearts rise in reverential gratitude to Sri Ramakrishna and his greatest apostle Swami Vivekananda and other blessed Swamis who made the existence of such an Ashrama possible for us in this Western world.

We feel a deep debt of obligation to India and especially to the Ramakrishna Mission for sending to us such worthy souls to help us and guide us in our paths towards the attainment of Divine Wisdom.

The month at the Shanti Ashrama was surely of

tremendous import in the life of each one of us. No one could be there and fail to feel, in some degree, the subtle forces of the place. It was as if we were in the very arms of the Divine Mother and could feel the throb and beat of Her heart. It did affect all of us differently, perhaps, yet such forces must inevitably leave a permanent impress on our lives and characters. To be sure such forces might stir up all the sediment which, all unrecognised possibly, was down at the bottom of our hearts, but could anything be more vitally important to us? In the wonderful peace and quiet of the Ashrama, there would be time and opportunity to throw out the sediment as it rose to the surface of our mind, and we could return to our tasks and duties in the world with purer hearts and a clearer knowledge of ourselves—with hearts strengthened and refreshed through our closer communion with Divine Mother.

Western Disciples
at the feet of
Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

LIFE OF H. H. MAHARAJA TUKOJI RAO HOLKAR II—By
M. W. Burway. Published by the author from the
Holkar State Printing Press, Indore. Pp. 642 & xcvi.
Price, Rs. 15.

This big volume with 59 illustrations delineates the life and career of a native ruler who is said to have fought hard for the dignity and prestige of his State till the last moment of his earthly existence. No pains have been spared to collect materials and make the work authentic and complete. The book may be appreciated by those who love and admire the Maharaja as well as by the native princes of India.

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 SADGURU-RAHASYA (HINDI) —By Kumar Kosalendrapratap  
 Sahi, Rai Bahadur Published by the Hindi Mandir,  
 Allahabad Pp 219 Price, Rs 2-8

The book under review is a devotional treatise dealing with Bhakti—love of God, as the easiest and surest means for the realisation of the *summum bonum* of life. The author has left no stone unturned to make the book attractive by quoting at random from Hindi, Sanskrit and English writers and inserting illustrations in places. The get up and printing have also been superb. In the chapter 'Science and Bhakti' the symbolic representation of the world of Maya having a human skeleton surrounded by some samples of the modern scientific invention is interesting though funny. The long list of errata at the beginning goes to the discredit of the publisher, and we hope that this defect will be remedied in the next edition.

HINDU-MUSLIM PRASNA (HINDI) —By Lala Lajpat Rai  
 Published by Ambica Prasad Bajpeyi from the  
 Indian National Press, 159B, Mechua Bazar Street,  
 Calcutta Pp 89 Price, As 8

A collection of articles that originally appeared in various newspapers and periodicals, dealing with the Hindu-Muslim problem. In this transitional period of Indian history when we are struggling for national self-determination, there is no problem so important as that of the Hindu-Muslim unity. But unfortunately as current events go to show, the unity between the Hindus and the Mahomedans is becoming an impossible thing. Communal quarrels and religious fanaticism reign supreme throughout the land, specially between these two communities. In the book before us we find the views and practical suggestions on the problem of a consummate thinker and veteran leader like Lalaji, which deserve the serious consideration of our countrymen.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS —By S .M Michael Pub-  
 lished by the Modern Literature Company, Hogarth

Press, Post Box No 344, Mount Road, Madras  
Pp 63 Price, Re 1-4

These gems of English verse are from the pen of one who though not widely known seems to be a budding poet. He has a fine imagination a keen susceptibility to beauty and a wide sympathy combined with a good grasp of English diction and versification. As we read the poems we felt their naturalness and spontaneity. Prof P. Seshadri M.A. of the Benares Hindu University speaks highly of the writer in an appreciative foreword with which the book opens. We wish we could quote extensively from the book, but want of space will not permit us to do that. The following lines from '*Europe—An Elegy*' will serve as samples.

'Peerless thou stood but yesterday in pride  
That stood as high as Heaven, like Glory's bride  
And smiled in scorn of all the universe —  
But now thy soaring pride has proved thy curse  
Too high thou held thy crowned and laurelled head  
Too proud before thy God then grew thy tread  
Thy glory vanished now thy splendours fled,  
Thy loveliness all gone, thou all but dead  
O hapless Europe now I see thee bleed,  
Unhappy mother, by thy very breed

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## REPORTS AND APPEALS

### THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES, FOR 1924

The work of the institution shows a steady increase in its usefulness. In the year under review 1,302 persons were admitted into the Indoor Hospital—a figure which surpasses all previous records. From the Outdoor Dispensary 14,784 patients were treated. Besides these, the Home has extended its work in other useful ways. It

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gives free board and lodge to a number of invalids, male and female, it admits boys and girls who are given proper training under qualified workers, and there is a weaving department which turns out young men fit to earn an independent livelihood. Besides, poor but respectable families are helped with weekly and monthly doles of rice, money, clothing etc., sometimes in their own houses, and occasional help is given to deserving people in the form of free meals, passage money etc. In the year under review the total income, including the last year's balance, is Rs 84,948 and the expenditure is Rs 58,857-5-10. The Home appeals for funds for the endowment of more beds for patients, for a building for accommodating workers and a permanent shed for the home-industry department. The public will, we hope, extend help to this useful institution.

THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA
MISSION SEVASHRAMA MUTHIGUNJ, ALLAHABAD, FOR
1924

Situated at a provincial capital and a very important place of Hindu pilgrimage, the Ashrama is fulfilling a crying need. During the year under review 16,749 sick persons were treated irrespective of caste and creed. But as the Ashrama is greatly handicapped for want of funds, it finds it difficult to cope with the ever increasing amount of disease and suffering amongst the people. The Ashrama is in great need of an Indoor Hospital of at least six beds, for which a plot of land has already been purchased. The building will cost about Rs 10,000 approximately. We trust the generous public will render all possible help to this useful institution.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
CHARITABLE DISPENSARY AT BELUR, HOWRAH, FOR 1924

The dispensary has been a great boon to the poor population of many miles round, as the locality is greatly infested with malaria. The dispensary administers not only free medicine but diet and pecuniary help also.

are given, if necessary. In the year under review 9,979 patients were treated, of whom 3,997 were new cases. This year Kala-azar patients were treated with injections, and 33 such cases were taken up. Any contribution in the shape of money, medicine or the like should be sent to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur (Howrah).

REPORT OF THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY FOR 1924

In the year under review the Society arranged 37 lectures on philosophy and religion by eminent scholars, Pundits and Sannyasins, held 12 monthly conversations, in different parts of the city and conducted weekly religious classes in the Society-room. It also celebrated the birthday anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda and Bhagavan Buddha Deva. The Society helped 26 poor students in the year, and from the Charitable Dispensary altogether 400 patients were treated. The Society conducts also a Library and Free Reading Room, which seems to have been fairly utilised by the public. The total receipts of the Society amounted to Rs 5,196-13 0 including the balance of the previous year. The amount spent was Rs 2,891-5-6, leaving a balance of Rs 2,305-7-6, of which Rs 1,493-14 0 belongs to the Building Fund. The Society is trying to raise funds for the erection of a building which may serve as a sacred memorial to the illustrious Swami Vivekananda in his birthplace in Calcutta and also supply a house of its own to facilitate its work. It is estimated that about Rs 50,000 will be required for the purpose, and any contribution towards that will be thankfully received by the Secretary of the Society at 78-1, Cornwallis Street Calcutta.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE CONQUERORS CONQUERED

The conquest of soul, though slow and imperceptible, has more far-reaching effects than a physical conquest that is quick and ostentatious. The former works slowly and silently, but is steady in its result. It touches the inner man and transforms the individual. But the latter proceeds with a proud display of brute force and captures the body, whereas the soul remains unaffected. Hence it will not be saying too much if we say that physical conquest is no conquest. Has it not been said of Greece that she conquered Rome, her conqueror, by her art, literature and philosophy?

In a beautiful article appearing in the 'Bombay Chronicle,' Mr M M Gidwani while recounting the experiences of his recent tour in Europe speaks of the silent influence of Indian civilisation on England. He says—"The influence of India on England is subtle. It resembles those geological movements which go on every day, every minute, imperceptibly, but none the less surely beneath the earth's surface." Of course, England loudly proclaims her conquest by machine-guns, aeroplanes, wireless telegraphy and radio. But India is modest in her aspiration. She aims at silently conquering her conqueror by her unique achievements in the field of literature, art, philosophy and religion. The writer mentions how the work of Dr Rabindranath and Swami Vivekananda are slowly working amongst the educated circles of England who hanker after truth irrespective of all considerations of colour, creed or nationality. Incidentally he narrates some touching incidents of his personal experience and proves this fact.

While at Stratford-on-Avon he had the occasion of being the guest of an English countess, Lady Sandwich. He had talked, he says, to famous people in England, given interviews and signed autographs, and he was then

thirsting for a quiet time when his hostess referred him to a room upstairs, called the Swami's Room' "Presently I found myself in a Hindu temple!" says the writer feelingly "It was a carpeted room with idols, photos of Swami Vivekananda, flowers and Hindu religious books. This was the only place of its kind I had been to in Great Britain, and the few hours I passed there in silent thought were the happiest recollection of my tour in Europe. I guessed that my kind hostess must be a disciple of the great Swami, and when later I found her distributing flowers from 'the Swami's Room' to a group of English friends I had no doubt of it. I began to ask myself the question—'Who was ruling Stratford on Avon, Shakespear or Vivekananda?'"

A NEGLECTED POINT OF EDUCATION

Self-confidence is the first condition of success in every sphere of life. In proportion to the confidence a man has in any undertaking, he comes out triumphant. To fear has rightly been termed as a great sin. For, fear is the cause of all weakness and failure in life. It very often falsely circumscribes the possibilities of our life and curbs our real strength. Only in a weak physique germs of disease can act, whereas a strong body easily withstands the influence of many dangerous bacilli. Our body if weak becomes susceptible to disease at first, before we actually fall ill. In the same way through fear and loss of self-confidence, one invites failures much before they actually come.

However much we may labour and persevere, we cannot be sure of achieving an end unless we have the conviction of success. For, without that we shall always have some misgivings whether we are not fighting for a lost case or an impossible undertaking. An ideal which is too high is not worth aspiring after. A work which we think does not come within the bounds of possibility, is doomed to failure. When we set our hands to a thing, we have very often a mental picture of it as accomplished, and it is this picture which serves as a beacon

light and source of strength amidst all trials and difficulties. The dream of the discovery of a new land was so very real and vivid in the case of Columbus that he was not in the least daunted, though after a long, weary voyage in the unknown sea all his followers not only got disgusted with his mad project but actually stood against him. He was not even slightly discouraged, because the conviction of success was so strong in him that he could easily set aside the opinion of the whole world.

This law is so true in all fields of activity—material, moral and spiritual. The man who calls up courage and tries to be above all weakness, is safe from hundred attacks of Mara or Satan, who is ever on the alert to prey upon a soul. John Bunyan has rightly said that in the path of a religious aspirant, very often stands a grim-looking lion, which frightens away chicken-hearted persons, but is quite harmless to a dauntless spirit. It is a great truth, strongly preached by a sage that we become sinners as soon as we *think* ourselves to be such. It is an age of self-assertion. We are to assert our rights as children of Bliss and claim our Divine inheritance, before we can expect a real success in the spiritual world. It was this spirit which led Buddha to call up indomitable strength and energy when his body and mind and the forces of nature conspired together to desist him from his undertaking.

Now, this spirit of faith in oneself is what is greatly needed to be implanted in all young minds. If education is the *unfoldment* of perfection *already* in man, all that an educationist should do is to convince his students about the truth of that. He need not go to work out every detail for his pupils. He should simply see that the latter grow in confidence and imbibe positive ideas. A child which is always led by the hand is sure to be weak and crippled. Let him rather stumble and fall, and he will soon learn to walk unaided with his head erect. Now, if this spirit is rightly cultivated in educational sanctuaries, the teachers will be saved from much of their labours, and sighs of despair will blast a less number of lives.